

Your Rich Christmas Issue: Save It!

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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The Rough Cradle of Our King

By T. DeWitt Talmage

How painfully and wearily one thousand years of the world's existence rolled along, and no Christ. Two thousand years, and no Christ. Three thousand years, and no Christ. Four thousand years, and no Christ. "Give us a Christ," had cried Assyrian, and Persian, and Chaldean, and Egyptian civilizations, but the lips of the earth and the lips of the sky made no answer.

The world had already been affluent of genius. Among poets had appeared Homer, and Thespis, and Aristophanes, and Sophocles, and Euripides, and Alexis Aeschylus; yet no Christ to be the most poetic figure of the centuries. Among historians had appeared Herodotus, and Xenophon, and Thucydides; but no Christ from whom all history was to date backward and forward—B. C. and A. D. Among conquerors Camillus, and Manlius, and Regulus, and Hannibal, and Scipio, and Pompey, and Caesar; yet no Christ, who was to be conqueror of earth and heaven.

But the slow century, and the slow year, and the slow month, and the slow hour at last arrived. The world had had matins or concerts in the morning and vespers or concerts in the evening, but now it is to have a concert at midnight. The black window-shutters of night were thrown open, and some of the best singers of the world stood there, and, putting back the drapery of cloud, chanted a peace anthem, until all the echoes of hill and valley applauded and encored the Hallelujah chorus.

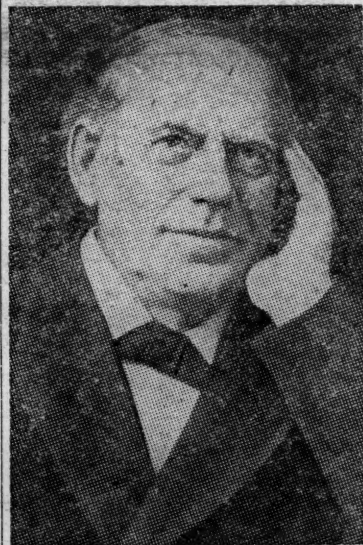
The Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar, had issued a decree for an estimate of the resources, and an enumeration of the people, of the many provinces that composed his empire. Ostensibly, this census was taken for the purpose of fixing the levies of the tax which might equitably be taken for the

dependencies of the Roman government; but its application to Judea seems to have been rather an initial act, under God, toward the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy:

"AND THOU, BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ART NOT THE LEAST AMONG THE PRINCES OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF THEE SHALL COME A GOVERNOR THAT SHALL RULE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL."

At the time the decree was published, Judea was not publicly

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Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage

A Christmas Sermon

Great News!

By the late Evangelist Dwight L. Moody

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10,11.

We are about to celebrate one of the grandest, if not the grandest event that ever took place in this world—the birth of Jesus Christ—Immanuel, God with us—and the text I want to call your attention to is the 10th and 11th verses of the second chapter of Luke that I have just read.

That was the announcement of the angels. They came to bring the good tidings to us, and if the angels cannot look into the future, I have not any doubt in my own mind that they thought the world would rise up and receive Him as one man. But instead of that we find that not only Herod, in Jerusalem, but that all Jerusalem was troubled, when the wise men brought the tidings in that city. If the shepherds had brought it they probably would not have received it—wouldn't have believed it—but because some wise men from a distant country brought the tidings that they had seen His star in the East, we are told that Herod and all Jerusalem was troubled by the thought that He had come. What God calls good news, man thinks is bad news.

It was so then. It is so at the present time. When we are preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ there are very few who believe it. I will venture to say half

this audience today do not believe that the Gospel is good news. The moment that you begin to proclaim the glad tidings, many a man and many a woman will put on a long face as if you had brought a death warrant, or as if you had brought them an invitation to attend a funeral, or to go out and witness the execution of some man, or to go to some hospital where there was some plague. They do not look upon the Gospel as good news. Do you think that ministers would

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D. L. Moody



Dr. Bob Jones, Jr.

MYSTERY DIVINE

By Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., D.D., Litt.D.

President, Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina

When God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate among men, it was a complete identification of the deity and humanity: God in Christ became man, in all points like unto man, except that He only of all the sons of man was completely free from sin. The Lord of glory became a child of earth. How great a mystery! The tiny Babe lying in the manger of Bethlehem was the One without whom "was not any thing made that was made." The tiny, chubby hand upon the cheek of the Virgin Mother was the hand of Him who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand. The baby arm about the mother's neck was the arm of the One whose everlasting arms are underneath all things. The lisping words of the toddling Child of Nazareth were the words of the One who spoke the earth into being and who created a universe by the word of His mouth. The knowledge of the twelve-year-old Lad in the Temple as He confounded and amazed the doctors of the law was the knowledge of the One who is the Author of all truth and the embodiment of all wisdom. The One sitting on the well curb to rest, tired from His journey and burning with the heat of the day, was the God who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The One who paid taxes to Caesar was the One who established human government and from whose hand Caesar received the power he so often misused. The whole wonder of the incar-

nation is this: it was for us, for you and for me, that God became flesh and dwelt among us. The personal application of His shed blood to our sinful hearts cleanses us; faith in Him imparts salvation to us. How wonderful that God should take upon Himself the form of man, become an inheritor of the "ills that flesh is heir to," suffer the ignominy of the cross! but how much more wonderful that He did this for us!

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes, the prisoner to release,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The wounded soul to cure,
And, with the treasures of His grace,
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

—Philip Doddridge

(From the book, SHOWERS UPON THE GRASS, by Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., \$2.00, Zondervan Publishing Company.)

The Angel's Christmas Message

By John R. Rice, D.D., Litt.D.



What a big book one could write on Christmas! How many sermons can be preached on holy themes from the Scriptures about the birth of our Saviour! I would like to preach a dozen sermons at Christmastime. One sermon could be on the text, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). One sermon could be upon the Old Testament prophecies of His birth, of the tribe of Judah, with a virgin mother, in the town of Bethlehem, in the fullness of time. One sermon

could tell of the wise men from the East, their faith in the promises of the Scripture in Daniel about the Prince, the King of the Jews, their following the Scripture and the star, their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. One sermon could be on the inn, where there was no room for Mary and Joseph. And there is enough material for many other sermons. But I want to write to you about the angels and their message to the shepherds in the fields and the blessed tidings of great joy that a Saviour was born.

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."—Luke 2:7

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Youth's Corner

The Editor Answers
Young People's
Questions

Is it wrong to make divisions or judge others about Christmas day and Christmas greetings?

You say "Won't you also take your stand against this evil Roman pagan practice, with all of us who want to go all out for Christ, and cut loose from all these Roman traditions?" Again I believe your zeal leads you to say more than you would honestly charge if you took time to think the matter through calmly. I am not bound by any Roman tradition and do not need to cut loose. And do you really believe that you want to go all out for Christ more than I do? Do you really believe that doing away with Christmas trees would be such a wonderful boon to this poor, lost world? Do you really believe that if nobody sang a Christmas carol, nobody preached a Christmas sermon, nobody sent a greeting card with Scripture on it, it would make the world so much better? In that, dear sister, you are out on a side-track, a blind alley. You are majoring on minors. The kingdom of God is not in meat nor drink nor in having Christmas trees or not having them. Actually those of us who are Christians like to have Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus may have been born on Christmas day. Even the best scholars do not know, but at least there is more reason for celebrating December 25 than any other known date. The Bible does not command it, and the Bible does not forbid it. Those of us who are good Christians, who keep Christmas, do it for Jesus' sake. On this matter is a scriptural statement that will help you, I trust. Romans 14:1-6 says:

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He

English Evangelist Available in the States Following April 6

Evangelist Don Summers, of Bristol, England, is to visit the United States in the spring, arriving April 6. Evangelist Summers is 31 years old, married, a Baptist. He was a music hall artist, an attractive speaker and singer. He has been three and a half years a staff evangelist of the National Young Life Campaign, covering the industrial West Midlands area in England. This year there have been some 1,700 professions of faith in his evangelistic work.

Rev. A. Lindsay Glegg, well-known evangelical leader in England, commends Evangelist Don Summers very highly.

Brother Summers has read THE SWORD OF THE LORD for seven years, has been in touch with the editor repeatedly, and we have confidence in his ministry.

Those who would like to use him in April, May, or June of 1956 for revival services may write him at 14 Elmcroft Crescent, Muller Road, Bristol, 7, England, soon.

that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

About this plain Scripture one should observe the following:

First, there is not to be doubtful disputations about it. Disputings here do not help. If there is no Bible command to observe a Christmas day and no Scripture forbids observing Christmas day, then to dispute about it is wrong.

Second, notice that one who does not eat is not to judge the one who does eat. The one who does not observe Christmas day is not to judge the one who does observe Christmas day. One who regards the day regards it unto the Lord. One who does not regard the day, to the Lord he does not regard it. You came out of Rome, so you are more sensitive on this matter and more fearful than some others. If you have convictions here on this matter which the Bible does not speak of, stay with them and still be a good Christian, but do not change and condemn others who do not agree with your convictions.

Now remember that I am clear on record that Christmas ought to glorify God, that there ought not to be any lies about Santa Claus nor any deceit; that everything a Christian does ought to be done to honor Christ. My children were never told and never did believe that there was a Santa Claus, and they were clearly taught the beautiful Christmas story of the birth of Christ. I do not defend the drunkenness and worldliness of

The Christ of Christmas

By Eugene M. Harrison

The Christ of Christmas now behold,
The Christ of Christmas morn;
The One by prophets long foretold
In Bethlehem is born.
He is God's Son, Immanuel,
Our Saviour and our King;
Let every heart the tidings tell
And with the angels sing.

CHORUS:

*The Christ of Christmas let us adore,
His praises let us sing,
And love and serve Him evermore,
This wonderful Saviour and King.*

The shepherds rest beside the sheep
Upon Judean hill;
An angel choir disturbs their sleep
With songs that echo still.
To Bethlehem in early morn
The shepherds wend their way;
Their hearts rejoice, the Babe is born,
And sleeps upon the hay.

The wise men cross the deserts wild,
Their treasures rare to bring;
Beneath the star they find the Child,
A Babe and yet a King!
To worship Him and minister
As to a king of old,
They offer frankincense and myrrh
And treasures made of gold.

Rejoice! for Christmas comes again
Around the whole wide earth,
To spread abroad God's love to men
As seen in Jesus' birth.
While Christmas bells in gladness ring,
Ring out o'er land and sea,
Make Him your Saviour and your King,
To reign eternally.

"The above poem is written by Dr. Eugene Myers Harrison, of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. He will pay \$25 to the composer of the best music to fit this Christmas song. And the entries should be addressed to him: Dr. Eugene Myers Harrison, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois."

of the ungodly, and I am not responsible for it.

You say that these weak young converts were caused to stumble because everybody else did not agree with you to do away with Christmas trees and Christmas greetings, etc. Then surely you can see that your insistence on this minor point of your own conviction where the Bible does not speak did not make those happy who followed you and did not help them to serve God any better. Surely anybody can see if they had been as much absorbed in honoring Christ and rejoicing in His birth—as many Christians were—they would have been happier and would have pleased God better. Why should a Christian be all the time studying some way that he can be opposed to Roman Catholics and embarrass Roman Catholics? See how far such folly would lead us. Catholics have church houses, so we ought not have church houses. Catholics worship on Sunday, so it is a sin to worship on Sunday. Catholics believe in prayer, so it is wrong for Christians to pray. That is absurd. Actually, Christmas is not a Catholic mass; one does not tend toward Catholicism by celebrating the birthday of Christ, and devoted, spiritual Christians for many centuries have honored Christ on that day. Why should you get young Christians absorbed in such a foolish and fruitless argument to the neglect of their spiritual growth and the ruin of their happiness?

You were kind to write me fully and I have answered as clearly as I can in the brief time available. I trust you will believe me honest and sincere in trying to help you, as I seriously am. Let us just remember the plain command of God in Romans 14:1-6. If you do not regard the day, then honor Christ in not regarding it, and God bless you. If it offends your conscience, then live by your conscience, but "not to doubtful disputations." And do not judge those who differ from you on this matter where the Bible has no command about

FLORIDA VACATION EASY: ROOM FREE!

By the Editor

Many would like to go to Florida in the cold winter time, but feel they cannot afford the big hotel bills. Well, if you are a gospel preacher and want a real Christian vacation, here is the way you can go to Florida cheaper than you otherwise could, and have eight blessed days at small expense.

February 19 to 26 the Sword of the Lord will conduct a conference on revival and soul winning at Sylvania Heights Baptist Church, 5859 S. W. 16th Street, Miami, Florida. Rev. Wayne VanGelder is the pastor. In this conference on revival and soul winning, speakers planned include Dr. Lee Roberson of Highland Park Baptist Church, and of Tennessee Temple Schools, Chattanooga, and Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., founder of Bob Jones University, along with Evangelist John R. Rice, editor of THE SWORD OF THE LORD. This noble church and pastor have agreed to furnish rooms for ministers from anywhere in the United States who actually come to attend this conference. The rooms will be free. Meals may be found at moderate cost. Those who accept this privilege will be expected to attend all the sessions of the conference, morning and evening. Those who wish to attend must make plans soon and make reservations. For reservations or for other information, address Rev. Wayne VanGelder, 5859 S. W. 16th Street, Miami, Florida. Say

plainly that you are a minister, and will attend the conference.

It is sunny and pleasant in Florida in February. Oranges hang golden on the trees, and giant sweet grapefruit. Clusters of coconuts hang in the palm trees. The deep blue of the Gulf Stream runs close by in the ocean. There are a thousand sights for vacationers. So if ministers of the Gospel really want to come to Florida, this is a good chance, provided they honestly agree to attend the sessions of the conference. There will be plenty of time for sight-seeing at other hours. Better write Brother VanGelder today!

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John R. Rice.



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The Venture of the Magi as Viewed By Their Contemporaries

By President V. Raymond Edman
Wheaton, College, Wheaton, Illinois

The Christmas story as recorded by Matthew under inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells of the coming to Bethlehem of certain Magi, "Wise Men from the East." The account does not tell us how many were in that party, but tradition lingers that there were three, largely perhaps because they brought three kinds of gifts.

From our perspective we regard them as very intelligent and spiritually minded men. But how did their venture appear to their fellow countrymen in that eastern land from which they came? The Scriptures do not tell us that part of the story, so I present it to you as seems to me the situation.

First we find ourselves in a crowded market place in the old Persian city of Arbela.

Admatha the merchant looked steadily and quizzically into his friend's face.

"What is this notion that I hear you have, Balthasar? You and your two friends Melchior and Caspar from the Royal Academy plan to go westward in search of a king?"

"Yes, Admatha, our plans are practically complete. If the camel drivers are ready we plan to leave with the caravan that goes to Palestine day after tomorrow."

"Palestine, why that is a long way off! Who is this king?"

"Admatha," replied the thoughtful and meditative Magus, "we do not know who he is. We only know that he has been born, and that we must seek him."

"Has the post from Palestine brought word about some new king?"

"No, there has been no word from there whatever."

"But Palestine is a Roman province. The emperor of the Romans is chosen by election, and does not inherit the throne of the Ceasars by birth."

"This new king is not a Roman. He is a Jew."

"A Jew!" snorted the cynical Admatha. "The Jews have no king, no royal family, no kingdom of their own! Man, do you not know that the despicably cruel and cunning Herod from Edom is now king under the Romans in Palestine?"

"Yes," replied Balthasar in measured tones, "but this new king is a Jew and not an Idumean."

"You mean some rebel is arising to usurp Herod's throne, knowing that the king is old and sickly; and you three plan to take part in that rebellion?"

"No, not in the least. We go to worship this new king whose realm will soon be larger than that of Rome and Persia put together."

"You Magi always talk in riddles and hyperbole! What chance has any Jew in Palestine to supplant Herod, much less be greater than Caesar? Be sensible about this matter, Balthasar. Think it through, for it appears to me to be the most foolish venture any so-called 'Wise Man' ever undertook."

"To me, Admatha, the whole idea seems to be the most practical and realistic I have ever entertained."

"But, tell me, how far is the journey? You do not know? Is the way not dangerous?"

"Yes, there will be many dangers by the way."

"How long will you be gone?"

"I do not know."

"How much will the journey cost you?"

"I do not know."

"You mean to tell me, Balthasar, that you do not know who this so-called 'king' is, nor where he is, nor where you shall find him, nor how long and how costly will be your journey; and you call yourself a 'Wise Man'? Why are you so sure about this perilous and foolish project?"

"Admatha, I have just two evidences, either one of which is sufficient for me, and the combination of the two is entirely conclusive."

"Two evidences, you say? What are they?"

"There is a star in the sky, and a deep stir in our hearts. That is all; and that is enough!"

Admatha looked more closely into the face of his friend and repeated slowly, "Just a star in the sky and a stir in your heart! What do you mean?"

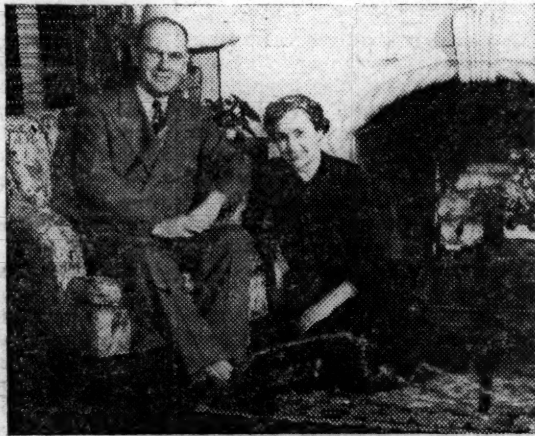
"I have been reading the Hebrew Scriptures, the books held sacred by that people who were captives in our land five hundred years or more ago. Some of them still dwell here in Persia. They hold that these Scriptures are given by inspiration of the Spirit of the God of gods. In the fourth book of their great law-giver, Moses, which book is popularly called 'Numbers,' there is recorded the prophecy which

reads, 'I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel . . . We Wise Men, Admatha, have seen that Star.'

"The sky is full of stars every night, and how can you distinguish one from another so as to say that any one of them is the star for a Jewish king? Furthermore, who has any faith in those books of the Jews? Have the leading philosophers and astrologers of the Royal Academy become convinced that they are from the God of Heaven?"

"No," replied Balthasar in his quiet, scholarly way; "only three of us have read them carefully and have become convinced of their divine origin and authority."

"Away with such ideas, friend Balthasar! Devote yourself to the writings of our ancients who were



Dr. and Mrs. V. Raymond Edman

far wiser than Jewish shepherds like this Moses. And what did you mean by a 'stir in your heart?'

"That I cannot explain to you, other than to say that I with my two companions at the Academy have experienced deep within a burning of heart as we have read this prophecy of the star foretelling the coming of a Jewish king, and in seeing his star. We believe that stir of heart to come from the Spirit of the God of Heaven, whom the Jews worship."

"Balthasar," said Admatha thoughtfully, "I never heard of such foolishness. It seems to me that after all you Wise Men are not so wise as we have thought."

A year later in Arbela.

Admatha looked up from the counter of his little shop in the market place of Arbela as he sensed that a human shadow had fallen upon it.

"Balthasar, Wise Man from the West! You have returned?"

"Yes, Admatha, the expedition has been completed and we three have returned to our homeland and to our friends."

"Did you find the king?"

"Yes, we did, just as the Hebrew Scriptures had prophesied and the star indicated to us."

"You found this Jewish king in Jerusalem?"

"No, no one there knew anything about him."

"Nobody in the capital city knew about the king? That is preposterous!"

"We began an eager inquiry about a newly-born king of the Jews. There began to be a considerable stir in the city because of our strange appearance and inquiry; with the result that King Herod himself sent for us."

"And then what happened?"

"In answer to his questions we explained the purpose of our visit. We went into some detail to refer to the prophecy in Numbers, chapter 24, and to our studies by which we had determined which star belonged to the new king. He inquired how long it had been since first we saw the star, and how long we had been on our journey. He then called the elders of the Jews and made inquiry of them if they knew anything about a king. They also referred to their sacred Scriptures, as I recall, in the Prophet Micah, in which they read words such as these, 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.'"

"Bethlehem? Where is Bethlehem?"

"We asked the way to Bethlehem, and were

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The Spirit of Christmas

By Dr. J. Harold Smith
Radio Bible Hour, Fort Smith, Arkansas

Over fifty years ago George Bernard Shaw invented a society for the abolition of Christmas. For him he said Christmas was simply a "nuisance," supported by the "mob" as a "carnival of mendacity, gluttony and drunkenness." The way some people keep Christmas would be grounds for such a charge, we admit. Some eat too much on Christmas, some get drunk and some indulge in expressions of good will which are not sincere. But after fifty years of campaigning, Mr. Shaw had to admit his society was a failure. "So far," he said, "I am the only member."

Christmas lives on, its spirit having captured the hearts of old and young, and the tender beauty of Christmas sentiment and Christmas singing affords an opportunity for the Gospel to enter many a life that is closed to God throughout most of the year.

When I think of Christmas, I think of Christ, of gifts, of God's great unspeakable gift. "Glory to God," the angels sang, when Christ the Lord was born on that blessed Christmas morn.

Would that we who name His name might catch something of His sacrificial spirit, as we gaze upon the millions who are dying without knowing of this great sacrifice. It was Nehemiah the Prophet who said to the people of his day, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord."

There are millions this Christmas for whom nothing is prepared. Famine stalks through many lands this Christmas season. Starvation faces multitudes in the very land where our Saviour was born. Thousands of little children will be crying for a crust of bread and there will be no answer to their cry.

And yet we remind you, great as the physical need is, the spiritual need is greater. Millions are passing out into a Christless eternity, and we have the answer to their need. Shall we withhold? Not if we have the true Spirit of Christmas.

Correction Please!

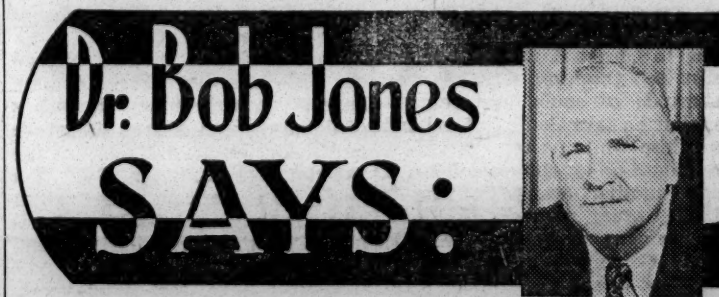
By the Editor

In a recent article in THE SWORD OF THE LORD we named the associate editors of the Scofield Reference Bible as believing in the imminence of Christ's coming, and that His coming will be before the tribulation time. Among those named were Dr. W. J. Erdman. Now, a letter from Rev. H. LeRoy Patterson of South Park Church, Park Ridge, Illinois, comes enclosing a pamphlet by Dr. Erdman after he had changed his opinion. He once believed that Jesus may come at any moment, but later changed his mind and that opinion is expressed in his most recent

pamphlet.

Brother Patterson enclosed a letter from Dr. Fred Erdman, a son of Dr. W. J. Erdman, and he says, "The fact that most of my father's Premillennial friends completely boycotted him should prove that they understood his position."

We mention this simply to keep the record straight. It is still true that a generation ago most Christian leaders who were premillennial in doctrine and took the Bible literally expected Christ to come at any moment, as we understand from the Scriptures He repeatedly said He might.



I quote from a letter from one of our finest Bob Jones University graduates who is winning souls to the Lord Jesus Christ in a wonderful way in Korea: "We praise the Lord with you over the way you are being able to expand, and we know that all of these new buildings will be used for the glory of the Lord Jesus. I surely do thank the Lord for the training-I received at Bob Jones University and for the fundamentals you kept drilling into us at chapel and preacher boy's class. I find the battle is getting increasingly difficult with the forces of evil as the days go on; but we just have to keep on keeping on, as you taught us."

Similar letters are coming to us from our students in all parts of the world. We pledge you orthodox Christian people that Bob Jones University is not going to surrender. It is not going to compromise. We are going to fight the battle through as we have

been fighting it here on the campus of the University for nearly twenty-nine years. You can help us. First: You can pray for us. Second: You can put us in contact with the right type of students that can be trained for courageous Christian leadership. Third: You can help us by putting some of the money the Lord has given you into our expansion program and into our Student Loan Endowment Fund to help students who need help and into our missionary program. You will never know how much grace it took for us to decide to put a certain percentage of the money that comes in into the spread of the Gospel on the foreign mission field. Now, we do not want you Christian people to let us down. We are counting on you. Thank you and God bless you.

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I'VE REALLY STUCK MY NECK OUT!

Now Giving About \$32,000 Worth of Free Books to Earnest Students for the Ministry in 200 College and Seminaries. I Have Risked God's Promises. Did I Do Wrong?

By Editor John R. Rice

Now I have done it! I sent to the presidents of nearly 200 Christian colleges and seminaries, or to the presidents of the ministerial organizations among the students in these Christian schools, an offer. I enclosed a form on which students will be allowed to request certain books. I asked them to get as many of the forms as ministerial students in their schools would use. Then I announced the offer in THE SWORD OF THE LORD. Some 4,760 request blanks have gone out, either to young ministers who requested them individually, or to the leaders in these schools who will distribute them to ministerial students in actual training.

Now these request forms are coming back in great numbers. Already about 565 young preachers in actual training for the ministry have sent in requests averaging \$7.28 each, and these more than \$4,000 worth of books are already shipped! Most of the others who are filling out forms will send them in soon. I estimate that it will take over \$30,000 worth of books to fill these requests. As long as the books last, God willing, I plan to send them free to these ministerial students to whom I have offered them who will fulfill the conditions and ask according to the plain instructions I have given. I am already committed, the books are already going out by the thousands. Now you see I am in this blessed business of giving away these Christian books to hungry-hearted young preachers in actual training for the ministry.

Did I Play the Fool?

Of course by the blessing of God these books will do great good, I know. I have thanked God a thousand times for the men who put in my hands Dr. R. A. Torrey's little book, *How to Pray*, when I was in my teens, and a little later the great book, *George Mueller of Bristol*, by A. T. Pierson. Someone else gave me the book, *In His Steps or What Would Jesus Do?*, by Charles M. Sheldon, and still somebody else gave me or loaned me the *Autobiography of Charles G. Finney*. Only eternity can tell what these books did for me in teaching me to pray, teaching me how to win souls, to see the price one must pay to be a good Christian. I say I know what these books will do.

I remember the great joy with which I heard of a cold, defeated, powerless preacher in Oklahoma who got the book, *How to Have a Revival*, sat up all night reading it, and the next day started a gracious, blessed revival with the power of God in his church, a revival in which many souls came to Christ. I think of Evangelist Bob Oughton, who has won thousands of souls, and remember that he says God laid His hand upon him while he read my book, *Prayer—Asking and Receiving*. I know another evangelist who is winning great numbers to Christ who was set on fire by the little Moody Colportage book of mine, *The Soul-Winner's Fire*, as I recall his testimony. I remember that Dr. Billy Graham named my book, *The Power of Pentecost*, as one of the ten books most influential in his life. I remember the kind words of Dr. R. G. Lee, Dr. Lee Roberson, Dr. W. A. Criswell, Dr. Hyman Appelmann, and Dr. Jesse M. Hendley in reporting some blessing brought by various of these books. I know that in God's mercy, what He has done before He will do again. He will establish people's faith in the Word of God. He will set preachers to soul winning. He will put some iron in their blood so that they can preach against sin and take a plain stand against worldliness and modernism. I feel certain in my heart that God will call out a good many soul-saving evangelists through these books we are sending, shipping out every day by the hundreds of dollars worth.

But WILL I BE LEFT ALONE TO CARRY THIS BURDEN? The books will do good, but was this foolish of me to give them away

free to the hungry-hearted boys burdened to preach the Gospel, who want them and ask for them? These boys who have laid everything else aside to go to school. Some of them struggle, work hard to pay their own way. But will God leave me desolate with no way to pay the printing bills? Will the staggering expenses of manufacturing these books and mailing them be left to strangle our soul-winning work and break my heart? Will Christian people ignore those gifts in which they could have a part, and leave me alone? I ask you to say frankly: did I play the fool? Do you want to write and tell me that I did?

This Is Not a Money-Making Business

The Sword of the Lord has never been a money-making business. It has never made money and has never been intended to make money. It is true that we have to have a definite subscription price for THE SWORD OF THE LORD. The postal laws require it for the second class postage permit and low postal rates. And if book stores are to distribute our books, there must be a regular price. That is right and proper. The laborer is worthy of his hire, and it is proper for good Christian people to be in the book business and help get out the Gospel that way.

But THE SWORD OF THE LORD is owned by a nonprofit corporation called the Sword of the Lord Foundation. Mrs. Rice and I turned over all the books, buildings, desks, typewriters, office machines, and equipment to the Sword of the Lord Foundation and gave a quitclaim deed. We can never regain possession of this property. We can never get profit from it, and we never intend to. For twenty-one years I have taken no salary from THE SWORD OF THE LORD. I take no royalty on my books. I take no pay for articles of mine printed.

The Lord has greatly blessed our Free Literature Fund, and we have given away many thousands of dollars worth of free literature on the foreign mission fields of the world and in America. So I can never be content to make this a straight buying-and-selling business. It is the Lord's business and more giving than selling.

Then I have, for many years, lived on the great promises of God in the Bible, and they are nearly all for givers, not for sellers. So I felt clearly led of God to give to ministerial students, preacher boys in actual training for the ministry, some books which they want, which I know will be of blessed influence and inspiration to them. It seemed to me a chance to inspire, to establish in the faith, and to set on fire for soul winning these young men whose hearts God has touched. So we set out to give ministerial students a limited list of books from which each one must choose for himself, and only one time each school year.

We Stepped Out by Faith on God's Promises

As we prayed, waited on God, and looked for promises in the Bible, God led us to certain great promises.

1. On September 24, this year, my heart was led to specially meditate upon II Kings 4:3. To the poor widow of a son of the prophets whose two sons were about

to be sold into bondage to pay her debts. Elisha said, "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few." She was to bring these vessels to her house and pour out of the one small pot of oil. She did so; the vessels were wonderfully, miraculously filled, and then the flow of oil stopped. She sold her oil and had enough to pay her debts, redeem her sons, and to live on.

As I read this verse God seemed to say to me that I should seek some means that God could bless to pour out His Spirit upon many. I should seek some way to give God vessels He could fill. It seemed to me that the quickest and best way to do it was to offer to give certain books to ministerial students who should request them under conditions I would set. So beside this verse in my Bible, II Kings 4:3, I marked this note: "September 29, '55, names of ministerial students for books and papers." Then I wrote to the presidents of great Christian colleges and the presidents of ministerial associations in the colleges, and asked if they would like to have some of these blanks to distribute for requests. And requests have now come in for some 4,760 blanks on which students are requesting the books.

2. As I continued to pray, God laid another passage of Scripture on my heart even more fitting. I had been reveling in II Corinthians for days. Then II Corinthians 9:6-8 struck me most forcibly:

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

I considered first that to give these books to young ministerial students who wanted them and needed them would be sowing for the Lord. To give them to some thousands of students would be sowing bountifully. And God had said, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." And now, according to what God had put in my heart, as I verily believe, I set out to give these books and not grudgingly, and not because of necessity, but out of a cheerful, loving heart.

Then there was the clear promise that one who sowed so bountifully "shall reap also bountifully," and the added assurance is "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

I thought, "What will we do about money to carry on this work? The books that are gotten out must be reprinted, kept in stock. We will need to spend thousands of dollars replacing them. We are giving away a considerable percentage of our net worth. Is it safe?" But the Scriptures say that God is able to give so that we "always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work," and on that ability of God and that willingness of God and that promise of God I stepped out. Did I do wrong?

3. Another Scripture God pressed upon my heart is Proverbs 1:25, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Here it is the liberal soul, not the stingy soul, that shall be made fat. And here is the blessed promise that God will see that the giver is repaid. The liberal soul shall be made fat, wealthy, prosperous. And he that waters others shall be watered himself!

I have lived for many years on this kind of a promise. I have had no salary for myself. I make no requirements as to what I shall receive for remuneration in revival campaigns, conferences, or anything else. I made God a vow in 1926, 29 years ago, I said, "Lord, you look after my business and I will look after your business." But will the same promise which has so wonderfully worked in the provision for my family and home—will it work in giving to nearly

Gifts or Taxes? To God or Government?

The United States government actually encourages you to give part of your tax money to religious and benevolent organizations like your church and the nonprofit Sword of the Lord Foundation. You may reduce your income tax by giving to the Sword of the Lord to help get out the Gospel.

By law citizens are allowed to give up to 30 per cent of their income and to deduct the gifts from that taxable income on which they pay income tax, provided that the gifts are given to proper concerns. That means that the government will pay part of the gift you give to help get out the Gospel.

Hence we urge Christians to prayerfully consider, as the year comes to a close, if it would not be wise to give as largely as you can afford to do so, when actually the government will be helping you give to get out the Gospel.

Even those who are in the lowest possible income tax bracket pay 20 per cent on taxable income, after proper deductions have been made. In that case, for every \$5 you give to the Sword of the Lord, a nonprofit corporation for getting out the Gospel, the government allows you to pay \$1 less in tax. But some men and corporations whose income tax may run 50 or 70 per cent, will find that for every \$10 gift to the Sword of the Lord, the government may allow tax reductions of \$5 or \$7 or more. And Congress properly recognizes that it is as important for these great Christian enterprises, supported by gifts of God's people, to carry on as for the government to have the money in taxes. It is your right and your privilege to claim deductions up to the limit prescribed by the government, when gifts are sent to a nonprofit corporation recognized by the federal government, as is the Sword of the Lord Foundation.

Before the end of the year, then, make your gifts. You may wish to give to the Sword Ministers and Missionary Subscription Fund, which will take care of the

subscriptions of more than 1,500 foreign missionaries and some thousands of ministerial students, retired ministers, and others who could not pay for their own subscription and for some preachers who ought to be introduced to THE SWORD OF THE LORD for their blessing. Would you make some holy, spiritual investment in sending the Gospel to ministerial students, foreign missionaries, native Christian workers in foreign countries, retired, saintly preachers who have little money, and to other ministers?

Or you may feel led to send a large gift to the Sword Free Literature Fund. We have just promised \$1,500 worth of the booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" in Spanish for Venezuela to missionaries and Youth for Christ workers for the World Congress on evangelism next summer. We have just been sending thousands of dollars worth of books requested by ministerial students in some 200 colleges and seminaries. We will give away an estimated total of \$32,000 worth of books to young ministers in the months of November, December, and January, and we desperately need your help. Surely God will repay.

Or you may designate your gifts to the Sword Building Fund, looking toward the greatly needed office building which we plan to erect in Wheaton when we can, and unite our scattered work.

For the sake of actual saving on your income tax, we suggest that you send that gift before the year is done and get a signed receipt.

Address your letter to the Sword of the Lord, Wheaton, Illinois. And God bless you.

5,000 ministerial students good Christian books that will stir and warm their hearts, establish them in the faith, and protect them from modernism and heresies and worldliness? Will it work for the Sword of the Lord Foundation as it has worked for me? At least I felt I must try it.

4. Another Scripture which I leaned on is in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, SHALL MEN GIVE into your bosom . . ." You see, God said that if we gave, He would see that men should give it back. So God intends that all these books given with loving heart and earnest prayer, and as wisely and sensibly and moderately as we knew how, to nearly 5,000 ministerial students in actual training, I say God means that good men should help us pay these enormous printing and binding and shipping bills, and pay the wages of the people who do the work and mail them out, and pay the post-

age bills. Or God could leave money in the mail box for us without anybody sending it. But that is not the way God usually does it.

In the blessed promise in Luke 6:38 Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, SHALL MEN GIVE into your bosom . . ." You see, God said that if we gave, He would see that men should give it back. So God intends that all these books given with loving heart and earnest prayer, and as wisely and sensibly and moderately as we knew how, to nearly 5,000 ministerial students in actual training, I say God means that good men should help us pay these enormous printing and binding and shipping bills, and pay the wages of the people who do the work and mail them out, and pay the post-

(Continued on page 12)

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God Uses Men to Keep His Promises

Of course God could do business without men. God could save men by messages from angels, without using preachers and soul winners, parents and teachers. But He does not. God could give pastors manna from Heaven instead of having His people supply their need, but He doesn't. God has said, "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Cor. 9:14). So God could some way print all these books in Heaven and hand

The Virgin Birth of Christ

By Dr. John R. Rice, D.D., Litt. D.



20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

—Matt. 1:20-25.

The virgin birth of Christ is one of the most important doctrines of the Bible. Notice from verse 23 that "a virgin shall be with child," or as it is given in Isaiah 7:14, "a virgin shall conceive." Mary conceived while yet a virgin. She was still a virgin when the Saviour was born: "and shall bring forth a son." That is further stated by verses 24 and 25: "Joseph . . . knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son." The virgin birth is particularly stated in Isaiah, in Matthew, and in Luke. When the angel gave the promise of the birth of Christ to Mary, she said, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). Read the answer of the angel in Luke 1:35. Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost, without a human father, and for that reason, says the angel, "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Jesus is the Son of God because He was virgin born. If the virgin birth of Christ is not true, then Christ is not the unique Son of God He claims to be. Any teacher or preacher who doubts the virgin birth of Christ is an infidel. This is a cardinal doctrine.

Note how many times the virgin birth is taught explicitly and implicitly in the Bible.

1. Isaiah 7:14 clearly states, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

2. Jeremiah 31:22 says, ". . . for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." Does not this mean that a woman alone, without a man, should have a man-child? That is what Mary did. And that virgin birth is "a new thing in the earth," unique, never to be repeated. Christ alone is virgin born.

3. Matthew 1:20-25 tells us that that which was conceived in the womb of Mary was by the Holy Ghost, fulfilling Isaiah 7:14; that a virgin did conceive, and still a virgin, did bring forth a son, and that this Son is our Saviour, God's Son come in the flesh by a miraculous birth.

4. Luke 1:26-37 tells how the Angel Gabriel appeared "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." It states Mary's honest question: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Then the answer of the Angel Gabriel is given in Luke 1:35. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." A miracle? Certain-

ly! But the Angel Gabriel settled that easily for Mary and for all believers in the God of the Bible when he explained to Mary in Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

5. Luke 2:48, 49 tells us that Jesus, at the age of twelve, clearly insisted that Joseph was not his father, but that in a peculiar and unique sense God alone was His Father. Mary said to Jesus, referring to Joseph, "thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Of course she knew that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, but spoke of him so as a matter of custom. All over the world foster fathers are called "father" by adopted children. My own father taught me to call my stepmother "mama," not meaning that she was my mother, but that she took a mother's place. So Joseph took a father's place, and thus Mary spoke of Joseph as "thy father." But Jesus answered, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). His clear meaning is that while He was subject to Joseph, it must not be thought that Joseph was His father. God Himself was literally, physically, His Father. He was virgin born, with no human father!

6. John's Gospel likewise teaches the virgin birth in stating that Jesus is "the only begotten Son" (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18). "Only begotten" means the only one begotten physically, directly, and literally, by God, without a human father. That could mean nothing less than the virgin birth!

7. Hebrews 11:17 also speaks of Isaac, who was a type of Christ, as Abraham's "only begotten son." Isaac was not really Abraham's only begotten son, but was counted so as a type of God's only begotten Son.

8. First John 4:9 has the same expression.

9. But everywhere in the New Testament the virgin birth of Jesus is implied. The bungling, zealous new convert, Philip, trying to win Nathanael, spoke of Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). It is not surprising that he, having been converted probably that very day, spoke of Jesus by accommodation as "the son of Joseph." But there is not any serious statement that Jesus is the son of Joseph in the whole Bible, nor is there a single implication that He was begotten, conceived, and born of natural generation. Throughout the New Testament the things said about Jesus could only be true if He were supernaturally conceived, the very Son of God literally, as no one else ever was the Son of God.

Again and again Jesus is spoken of as Creator. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). See also Hebrews 1:2 and Ephesians 3:9. His pre-existence with God is clearly stated. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God . . . The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1, 2). "And the Word was made flesh . . ." (John 1:14). The birth of Jesus simply meant that God's pre-existent Son was put in the womb of a virgin by an incomparable miracle. And so Christ, the pre-existent Christ who had been with the Father from the beginning, came into this world as man by a virgin birth.

In fact, it is repeatedly claimed that Christ is deity, that Christ is God, one with the Father. ". . . And the Word was God" (John 1:1). "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). That meant, necessarily, that Jesus was different from other men, essentially different in origin and nature. He really is, as Isaiah 9:6 plainly tells us, not only the child born,

the Son given, but "The mighty God, The everlasting Father." Jesus is God in human form! That sets Him apart from every other child born in the world and makes absolutely necessary His supernatural conception and His virgin birth.

In John, chapter 8, this question of Christ's deity and origin came up for discussion between Christ and the Pharisees. Jesus said, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19). Again He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:23, 24).

Here is a clear statement from Jesus Himself that He was from above and that all others are from beneath. He said, "ye are of this world; I am not of this world." The Jews to whom Jesus spoke were, by natural generation and by natural birth, of this world, born of the flesh. Jesus was, by supernatural conception, the only begotten of the Father, from above. Jesus certainly referred to His origin here. It was the origin of His physical body, too, to which He referred, because He was clearly speaking of the physical generation of the Pharisees to whom He spoke. Jesus meant that these Pharisees were begotten naturally of a tainted, sinful race, with a human father and a human mother and a natural birth. He was begotten supernaturally by the Spirit of God from above, and so was literally (the only one physically begotten) of God. By origin Christ was miraculous; all others are natural. He was born of a virgin without a human father; all others have human fathers.

The virgin birth of Christ is an essential doctrine interwoven with all the Word of God. To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the foundation of Christianity.

Matthew 1:23 Is God's Translation of Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 1:22 and 23 not only says that Jesus was born of a virgin; it says that Isaiah 7:14 says the same thing! "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." This Scripture clearly claims to give a translation of Isaiah 7:14. So the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible is mistaken and wrong in translating Isaiah 7:14, "Behold . . . a young woman shall conceive . . ." It should be, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive."

Isaiah 7:14, then, is a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ, and only unbelievers who do not accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God will deny it. The Greek word *parthenos*, translated *virgin* in the King James Version in Matthew 1:23, is also translated the same way in the RSV, the American Standard Version, and practically every other English translation of the Bible. There can be no possible misunderstanding of the word here in Matthew. It expressly claims not only that Jesus was born of a virgin, but that Isaiah 7:14 foretold this virgin birth. It is wonderful, that with all the discussion about what Isaiah 7:14 really means, we have the infallibly inspired answer from God in Matthew 1:23. Isaiah 7:14 says not merely that a young woman should conceive and bear a son, Immanuel, but that this young woman would be a virgin.

In the Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament into Greek by Hebrew scholars some two hundred years before Christ, Isaiah 7:14 is translated into the Greek, as it is in our Greek New Testament, in Matthew 1:23. For the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14, the Septuagint used the Greek word *parthenos*, clearly and indisputably meaning *virgin*.

At the present time all translators of the Old Testament deal with a dead language and must refer to lexicons, or search out the usage of Hebrew words in the

Old Testament the best they can. But the translators of the Septuagint translated from their native tongue, the living Hebrew language which they used regularly, into the Greek, then a common language. No modern translator has the advantages in translating Hebrew which the seventy elders translating the Septuagint had. They said that *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 meant *parthenos* just as Matthew 1:23 says in the Greek, or literally *virgin* in English.

The Hebrew word *almah* translated in Isaiah 7:14 in the King James Version and the American Standard Version, the Septuagint, and most other translations, as *virgin* occurs in the Old Testament Hebrew six other times as follows:

In Genesis 24:43 it is used of the virgin bride (Rebekah) which Abraham's servant prayed he might find for Isaac.

In the Song of Solomon 1:3 we read, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." There is no indication in the context that the term *virgins* here means anything but *virgins*.

In the same book, the Song of Solomon 6:8, the Hebrew word *almah* is used again, translated *virgin*: "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number." Here the term *virgins* certainly means single girls, not queens, and not concubines, but literally *virgin* girls.

Maid is a synonym for *virgins*, and twice in the Old Testament *almah* is translated *maid*.

In Exodus 2:8 the word is used about little Miriam, the sister of the baby Moses who watched his little basket boat, and ran to get her mother as a Hebrew nurse to work for Pharaoh's daughter, caring for Moses. All the Hebrew tradition was that Miriam was a small child at the time, and the Scriptures indicate as much. Obviously she would be regarded as a virgin and obviously *young woman* would not be a proper translation for the word *almah* in Exodus 2:8.

In Proverbs 30:18 and 19 three wonderful, beautiful things are mentioned. "Yea, four which I know not." And one of these wonderful, beautiful things is the course of young love, "the way of a man with a maid." The word *maid* is a translation of the Hebrew word *almah* and obviously refers to a virgin girl wooed by a man who falls in love with her.

In Psalm 68:25 the Hebrew word *almah* is translated *damsels*, and refers to girls in a holy procession. "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after, among them were the damsels playing with timbrels." These young girls worshipping God would be presumed to be virgins.

In not a single case is the Hebrew word *almah* in the Old Testament used to refer clearly to a married woman, or to an impure woman. It means *virgin*, and is properly so translated in most translations of the Bible including the King James and the American Standard Versions, and the Septuagint. Best of all, it is translated by the Spirit of God Himself in Matthew 1:23.

Critics say that Isaiah 7:14 should have used the Hebrew word *bethulah*, had it meant literally *virgin*. Critics, following the unconverted Jews after the time of Christ, and some lexicons, say that *bethulah* is the proper Hebrew word for *virgin*. A study of the use of *bethulah* in the Old Testament, however, seems clearly to prove them wrong.

In Isaiah 23:12 "O thou oppressed virgin" refers to Zidon the wicked, idolatrous city, announcing its coming destruction!

In Isaiah 37:22 the word *bethulah* translated *virgin* is used for Jerusalem, "The virgin, the daughter of Zion," when her sins had brought Sennacherib against the city. God here takes the part of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was not strictly a virgin.

In Jeremiah 18:13 God uses the word *virgin* to represent Israel. "The virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing." This sin is described: "Because my people have forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way

News Notes

New Wave of Violence and Murder in Colombia Charged

A new wave of persecution in Colombia, in which at least 11 Protestants have been murdered and an American clergyman severely beaten, was charged in a protest filed with the State Department by Donald H. Gill, Assistant Secretary of Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"Seven evangelicals were killed on the night of October 4th near Sevilla when the house of an evangelical pastor was attacked by 18 armed men, according to reports from Colombia," Gill declared. "An American missionary, Rev. Julius A. de Gruyter of Charleston, W. Va., was hospitalized with a double fracture of the skull after an unprovoked beating by two policemen on October 17th," Gill said.

Gill called on the State Department to lodge a protest with the Colombian Government.

"In recent weeks there have been numerous outbursts of violence against Protestants in South America," he stated. "Recent reports from Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia tell of assaults, destruction of homes and disruption of worship."

"In La Morano about 150 men, women and children were driven from their homes and farms, and one young man was killed."

"We are asking the Department of State to take note of these new outbursts and to do everything in its power to bring them to an end," Gill said. (ERA-11/9/55)

Canadian Supreme Court Bans Holy Day Law

A Quebec statute governing municipal observance of six Roman Catholic holy days was ruled invalid in a unanimous judgment by the Supreme Court of Canada.

This ruling, because it is final and cannot be repealed, brought to an end a bitter four-year-long fight waged by seven large Montreal retail stores which had fought a city by-law, based on the statute, requiring all stores to remain closed on the six days in question — Christmas, New Years Day, Epiphany, Ascension, All Saint's Day and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The ruling upset the decision of the Quebec Appeal Court which (Continued on page 11)

not cast up." Therefore because of their idolatry, God will "make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing" (vs. 16) and will "scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy" (vs. 17). Certainly, wicked, idolatrous Israel, given over to be destroyed for her spiritual harlotry, is not properly called *virgin*. The word *bethulah* does not necessarily mean *virgin*.

In Jeremiah 14:17 the word *virgin* (*bethulah*) is similarly used for Israel, being then punished for her iniquities.

Similar use is made of the word in Jeremiah 31:4, Jeremiah 31:21, Lamentation 1:15, and Lamentation 2:13.

In each of the above cases the word *bethulah* is used for wicked cities being punished for their sins, usually for idolatry, and in these cases, the word *bethulah* could not strictly mean *virgin*.

Another case is in Joel 1:8, "Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth." Here a widow is meant by the Hebrew word *bethulah*.

Let our hearts be comforted concerning the ravings of the critics. All the actual evidence goes to reassure Christians not only that Jesus was born of a virgin, but that His virgin birth was foretold, and that Matthew 1:23 properly translates Isaiah 7:14.

(The above article on the virgin birth of Christ, expounding Matthew 1:20-25, is taken from Dr. Rice's verse-by-verse commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The detailed research and exposition, the marshaling of Scriptures and facts on these six verses indicates the riches that may be expected in the commentary for the Bible-believing student. 504 big pages. Price: \$3.95. At your book dealer. Or add 20c postage and handling and order from The Sword of the Lord Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois.)

Grace Notes

By Grace Rice MacMullen

What About Popular Religious Songs

The other day a popular TV master of ceremonies, after hearing a lightly philosophical song which assures us there is happiness ahead somewhere, remarked, "Isn't that nice? I'm glad there is such a trend to religious music. It's good for us!"

The man was sincere; and there is a trend to religious music in the popular field. Church people have regarded the trend with varying opinions between two extremes. At one end they shudder and are disgusted by the "cheap music" and disrespect shown God at using His name indiscriminately over the microphones of the land. At the other end are those who feel any song that has any reference to God or Heaven or even a faint philosophical bent are a wonderful sign that America is turning to God and we should rejoice over the popularity of such songs and use them in our churches.

The moderate and perhaps best view would be somewhere in the middle, I think, and particularly would consider each song on its own merits.

There is a sense in which most of these popular songs falls down as a real bearer of the gospel, and many of them are actually misleading. Some which were written by Christians (and are actually true for a Christian) become sadly misapplied when sung by the world. Such a song is "Faith, Hope and Charity" written by Dale Evans, a real Christian whom I greatly admire. A letter came recently asking whether the song should be used in church. This is part of my reply: "To me the worst thing about the song is that it does not go far enough. It is good in that it stresses the Bible, and it mentions faith, hope and charity, which are certainly important to a Christian. But to say, 'Have faith, hope and charity; that's the way to live successfully,' really is so far short it is almost wrong for the person who does not know Christ. The song implies that if you live right, you will be happy here and the Lord will hear your prayer and take you to Heaven. Of course you and I know that trusting Christ is the only thing that will make you happy here and take you to Heaven. Living right without personal faith in Christ as Saviour will not do it, and having faith, hope and charity will not do it. So I think it is too bad that the song could mislead people into thinking they were all right just because they had, or thought they had, 'Faith, Hope and Charity.' But to a born-again Christian, faith, hope and charity are the way to live successfully."

The same is true of a song which has more recently become popular, called, "He." The words are really good—He (God) knows everything we do—wants us to be happy, etc., and closes with the phrase, "He'll always say, I forgive." Here again, something very important is left out. God does forgive our sins and mistakes if, and when, we confess them and forsake them, and trust Jesus Christ. This omission would be really serious if a sinner heard the song, believed that God automatically and always forgives, as the song says, and assumed therefore that he is all right with God and need have nothing further to do with God or Christ.

Dr. C. R. Daley, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, discusses the whole problem and one particular song, "The Man Upstairs" in these

words: "This week I am paying my respects to juke-box religion and if I sound sarcastic I offer no apology. When I say juke-box religion I am casting no aspersions toward the juke-box but toward the religion which characterizes so many people today. You know that popular song which pictures God as a swell guy living just above you who makes no real demands upon you but who is a nice fellow, always ready to help you out of a jam. This good guy that God is never gets upset over your little faults, does not require that you speak to him every day, expects no returns for favors granted. 'Have You Talked to the Man Upstairs' is a reminder that if nothing else helps when you are blue, you always have God. Such a wonderful spiritual example as Jane Russell has assured us the Lord is a 'living doll,' a right nice guy. This makes God chummy enough to be a good sport, a tolerant, broad-minded, understanding fellow. Hearing about this kind of God makes a person feel 'real good.'"

Should a Christian sing these songs? Should they be used in a young peoples meeting, Sunday School opening exercises, church services? My feeling is that it is perfectly all right for a Christian group to sing such a song as "Faith, Hope and Charity" for fun. I don't think it is deep enough, meaningful enough to be used in a service, even the most informal service. I would consider each song individually, but I believe most of the popular religious songs would fall down on this score. And even if they passed that test, I still think a song should not be used in a service if the music is jazzy and frivolous. If the words are disrespectful or wrong, I would not want to sing it as a Christian and some I would not even want to hear. But some could be used at a young peoples' party, for example, that would not be suitable in a service.

Once in a while a song appears that is a blessing to Christians and becomes popular as well. Stuart Hamblen's "It Is No Secret" is perhaps the best of these. This is a song that moved me deeply when I first heard it, and is still a blessing to me whenever I hear it properly sung. It reminds us that God is all-powerful, that none of our problems are too big or too hard for Him. The wonderful phrase "There is no night for in His light you'll never be alone," is one to hug to your heart on many an occasion. The words must have been written out of a deep experience with God and they say something very precious to me. If sung thoughtfully, with reverence and restraint and musical taste, I do not see how they could be offensive in a service.

Hamblen's "This Old House" is not such a happy example. The first time I heard it, it was well done and left me with the impression of a good, "religious" and not too jazzy number. It even carried a spiritual meaning for me; a meaning I confess I cannot recapture on hearing it quietly, now, after the hundreds of times it has been beaten out by a swingy jazz group.

Most of these songs could pretty well be covered by Dr. Daley's sentence: "Before I say more, let me confess I enjoy all this I've been making light of, but it is entertainment, not religion." To me, that about sums it up. He continues with the wise verdict, "My criticism is that this kind of sen-

Soul Winning

I would rather be the means of saving a soul from death than be the greatest orator on earth. I would rather bring the poorest woman in the world to the feet of Jesus than I would be made Archbishop of Canterbury. I would sooner pluck one single brand from the burning than explain all mysteries. To win a soul from going down into the pit, is a more glorious achievement than to be crowned in the arena of theological controversy as Dr. Suficientissimus; to have faithfully unveiled the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ will be, in the final judgment, accounted worthier service than to have solved the problems of the religious Sphinx, or to have cut the Gordian knot of Apocalyptic difficulty. One of my happiest thoughts is that, when I die, it shall be my privilege to enter into rest in the bosom of Christ, and I know that I shall not enjoy my Heaven alone. Thousands have already entered there who have been drawn to Christ under my ministry. Oh! what bliss it will be to fly to Heaven and to have a multitude of converts before and behind, and, on entering the glory, to be able to say, "Here am I, Father, and the children Thou hast given me."

—C. H. SPURGEON

timementality is often used as a substitute for religion which is real. God is not a doting old grandfather who is always so sweet and understanding, but a righteous and just judge who demands allegiance and obedience. He is the relentless One who pursues us until we repent. What we need to hear is not the gospel quartet soothing us with 'Everybody's gonna have a wonderful time up there,' but 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.' It is not 'I'm gonna have a little talk with Jesus' but 'Speak to my heart, Lord Jesus.'"

There is a large group of songs, really Christian in thought, which lie somewhere in that land of vague boundaries which includes cowboy music, hillbilly or "country" music, religious cowboy or religious hillbilly music, and ballads. Redd Harper's fine music would be considered Christian cowboy music. Redd's devotion to God and his understanding of the great fundamentals of the faith result in inspiring, happy music that most Christians enjoy. A new one, "The Answer Man" (published by Fiesta Music Co., Box 2471, Hollywood 28, California) is a good example.

"I don't know all the answers, But I know the Answer Man. I can't solve all my problems, But I know the one who can."

Tim Spencer's songs, too, are a blessing, particularly with the added spark of his personal testimony. And "Mustard Seed Faith" is another good one which can hardly be typed but is lots of fun to sing and hear.

These songs are effective and a spiritual blessing when sung by these consecrated Christians, and might well be used of God in church services, if sung prayerfully by spiritual Christians.

What about popular religious songs? Some can be used in church services if the words are really spiritual and they are made effective through prayer. Most of the others we can enjoy singing and hearing, if the rendition is not jazzy or objectionable.

I hope there is a song in your heart during this happy season—and the wonderful peace Jesus can give. Merry Christmas!

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"I Sure Hope It's for Me!"

By Dr. Sam Morris



In Childress, Texas, in 1906, there was a Christmas tree service in the Methodist church. That was in the pioneer days—49 years ago. The house was packed to the windows and doors. The tree was loaded with beautiful toys.

Just before the service started, a woman slipped in the back door with three little children—two little boys and a little girl. They sat down over in one corner of the house. That woman's husband had deserted her six years before, two months before the youngest boy was born. He had been gone six years; the wife did not know whether he was living or dead. Christmastime had come, and this poor family went to the Methodist church for the Christmas tree. She washed for a living down west of the courthouse, in the poorer section. They had built a little box house, took in other people's dirty clothes.

The man portraying Santa Claus began to take the toys from the tree. As the name of a little boy or girl was called, up would go a hand and a little childish voice would say, "Here I am! Here I am!" Many gifts were piled around some; not so many around others. Somehow they didn't get back into the corner where that woman was who washed for a living, who eked out a miserable existence over an old rubboard to support herself and babies.

After a bit old Santa pulled a little toy doll off the tree, one of these little talking dolls. As he turned it over, it said, "M-a-m-m-a-a." The little girl got all excited and her feet began to sway. Looking at her mamma she said, "Mamma! Mamma! That's it! That's the doll! That's the doll in the store on Main Street. That's the one I wanted! Is it going to be for me, Mamma?"

The woman looked off as the tears trickled down.

The doll went to another little girl in another part of the house.

Pretty soon he pulled a little cap pistol down and began to shoot it. As he shot that little cap pistol, the little boy six years old who had never seen his father, got all excited and jumped up in the seat and his eyes bugged out as he looked over the heads of people. He went into a spasm of delight. Looking at his little sister he said, "That . . . that . . . that . . . that's what I want! I've been keeping my eye on that! I sure hope it's for me!"

It went to another little boy.

When the toys were all gone and the tree stood stripped and bare, they reached at the foot of the tree and got a little mesquite-bar sack. Inside was an apple, and orange, a few nuts, and a stick of lightning-rod candy. They took one each to those little children, and some others like them.

Crowds went home and children's voices rang out in the night air, firecrackers boomed, Roman candles zoomed, toy pistols fired. The people went their way to warm, comfortable homes where lights glowed brightly, where fathers and mothers and children sat together at Christmastime.

That woman walked out of the Methodist church with her little children, each with a little mesquite-bar sack—no firecrackers, no Roman candles, no toys, wended their way down by the

nice homes, to this little box house she had paid for over the rubboard. That night no cookies were in the cookie jar, no coal in the scuttle. A widow in the pioneer days knelt by her bed. She didn't know much about God, nor the Bible, but she believed every Word in this blessed Book. She asked God to bless her little children and to help her feed them.

Do you know who that woman was? She was my mother. That was my little sister. Those little boys were me and my brother. I never laid eyes on my father until I was nine years old. That is a picture of a broken home.

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WITH THE Evangelists

REPORTS FROM AMERICA'S OUTSTANDING SOUL WINNERS

By the Editor

Sword of the Lord **EVANGELIST ROBERT L. SUMNER** has just conducted two fine revival campaigns. First, with Rev. K. G. Farnsworth and the Evangel Baptist Church of Wyandotte, Michigan, where there were 14 conversions, 10 rededications, and 24 families who pledged to begin daily Scripture reading and prayer in the home. In addition to the above decisions, there were 2 who came for assurance, 7 who came for baptism, 4 who joined by letter, making a total of 25 who are joining the church as a result of this fine meeting.

Evangelist Sumner was also with Frank E. Thompson and the Hunter's Creek Community Church, Lapeer, Michigan. Evangelist Sumner spoke highly of the pastor, a good friend of THE SWORD. Other Sword evangelists have also enjoyed the fellowship of this good man and church. During the present campaign there were 15 first-time conversions, 2 who came for assurance, 2 rededications, and 7 family altars started.

Sword of the Lord **EVANGELIST J. OSCAR WELLS** continues to have blessed revival campaigns across the country. We have just received reports of three rather brief but blessed campaigns. He was with Pastor S. H. Houbolt and the Good News Baptist Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, where there were 24 conversions and additions, and 25 rededications. The present pastor has been used of the Lord to build a new building and, according to the evangelist, it

it a good work.

Evangelist Wells was also with the Calvary Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Missouri, for ten days recently. The pastor is Alfred Thornton, an old friend of the Rice Brothers. (He was won to Christ by Evangelist Joe Rice, married by Evangelist Bill Rice!) During this campaign there were 21 conversions and additions, 15 rededications, and 12 families who began a family altar in the home. In addition to the nightly revival campaigns, there were 85 conversions in the state prison, making a total of 106 conversions and additions during the campaign.

Evangelist Wells was also with the Locust Grove Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where the Rev. J. H. Lyon is pastor. During this campaign there were 25 conversions and additions, and 27 rededications.

Sword of the Lord **EVANGELIST ERNIE HABECKER** recently conducted a fine revival campaign in Pennsylvania. Three neighboring communities arranged to have Evangelist Habecker come, and he spent a week or ten days in each, with the churches happily visiting and co-operating with one another. The Rev. Warren H. Ball, chairman, wrote Evangelist Bill Rice the following:

"During the campaign proper, we did personal, evangelistic visiting, calling on people who did not show up for any of the services. This was also fruitful and we were glad for the enthusiasm and support of the church and the people." (Continued on page 8)

loungers. What, O Mary, no light? "No light," she says, "save that which comes through the door." What, Mary, no food? "None," she says, "only that which is brought in the sack on the journey." Let the Bethlehem woman who has come in here with kindly attentions put back the covering from the babe that we may look upon it. Look! Look! Uncover your head. Let us kneel. Let all voices be hushed. Son of Mary—Son of God! Child of a day—monarch of eternity! Omnipotence sheathed in that babe's arm. Omniscience strung in the optic nerve of that child's eye. That voice to be changed from the feeble plaint to a tone that shall wake the dead, Hosanna! Hosanna! Glory be to God that Jesus came from throne to manger, that we might rise from manger to throne, and that all the gates are open and that the door of heaven that once swung this way to let Jesus out, now swings the other way to let us in. Let all the bellmen of heaven lay hold of the rope and ring out the news: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ, the Lord!"

A Glorious Night!

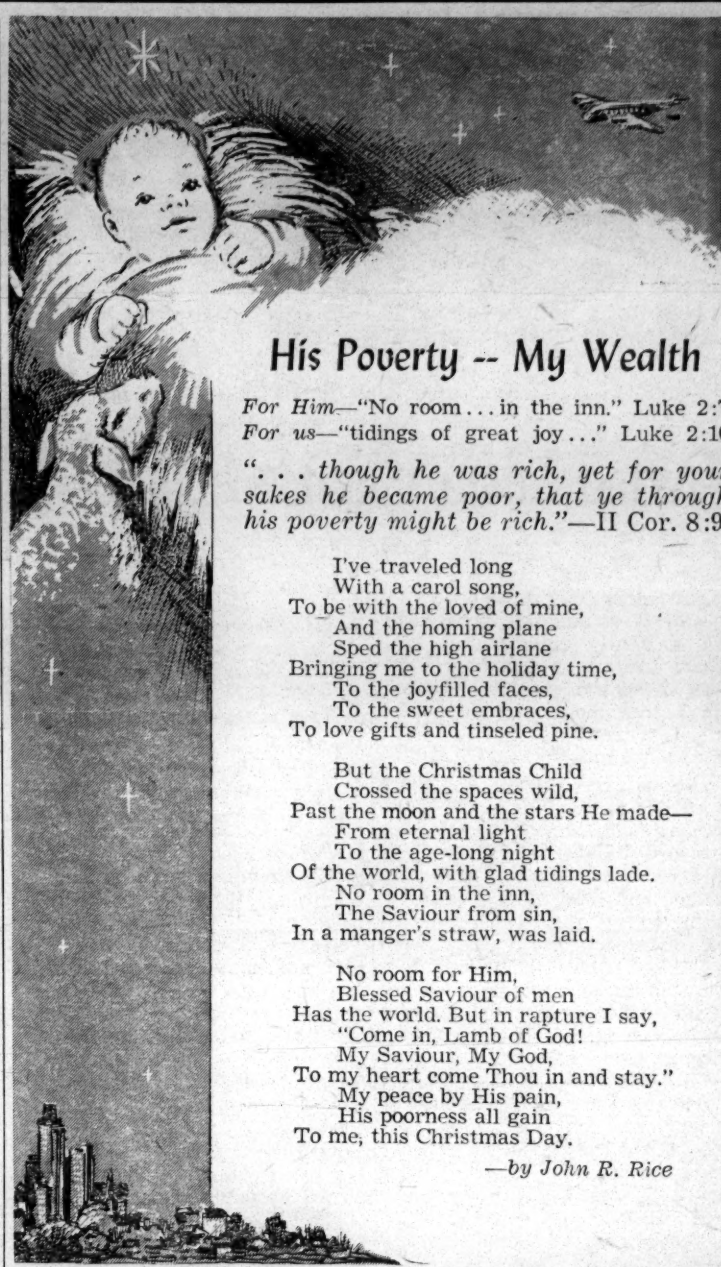
Bethlehem lies upon a hillside overlooking a beautiful valley, rich with succulent grasses on which great flocks of sheep were sent to graze in the time of Christ, and over which shepherds were appointed to watch. It was so in the days of David, perhaps, long before, and it is so still. These shepherds were accounted faithful, honest and religious; their occupation has ever been a symbol of humility and providential care, and the shepherd's crook has been made to take its place in church ritualism as a token of complacency with the Divine will, as well also to serve as an emblem of priestly authority.

It is not strange that to these faithful watchers the first news of the birth should be conveyed; but it was not by messengers afoot, nor by acclaims of priests, nor by cymbals and hautboys in the hands of worshippers. The effulgence of the day would have been needed to give them dispatch. The time was night, a holy night, when silence was nature's invocation, and the stars blazed their orisons with tremblings of ecstasy.

While "night," in all languages, is the symbol for gloom and suffering, it is often really cheerful, bright and impressive. I speak not of such nights as come down with no star pouring light from above, or silvered wave tossing up light from beneath—murky, hurtling, portentous—but such as you often see when the pomp and magnificence of heaven turn out on night-parade; and it seems as though the song which the morning stars began so long ago were chiming yet among the constellations, and the sons of God were shouting for joy. Such nights the sailor blesses from the forecastle, and the trapper on the vast prairie, and the belated traveler by the roadside, and the soldier from the tent. Earthly hosts gazing upon heavenly, and shepherds guarding their flocks a-field, while angel hands above them set the silver bells a-ringing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

On this blessed night the angel of the Lord rode out from the mansions of alabaster, down the steep from the skies, drawing with him streams of dazzling radiance like shadows of sun and stars, and with a rush of glories floated over the heads of the startled shepherds as they were keeping their quiet, perhaps half-sleeping watch. It was Gabriel, the holy messenger, who now came bearing more joyful tidings than were ever before unfolded.

But a flaming presence, at once so awful and magnificent, struck the simple shepherds with fear, for they did not immediately perceive the import of the angel's coming. Fear came upon them; and I imagine that a sight of so wonderful a spectacle, a revelation of sublime glorification floating in a blazing sea, would bring a flush of fear to the bravest heart. But the shining messenger at once spake peace to the shep-



His Poverty -- My Wealth

For Him—"No room... in the inn." Luke 2:7
For us—"tidings of great joy..." Luke 2:10

"... though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—II Cor. 8:9.

I've traveled long
With a carol song,
To be with the loved of mine,
And the homing plane
Sped the high airline
Bringing me to the holiday time,
To the joyfilled faces,
To the sweet embraces,
To love gifts and tinsel pine.

But the Christmas Child
Crossed the spaces wild,
Past the moon and the stars He made—
From eternal light
To the age-long night
Of the world, with glad tidings lade.
No room in the inn,
The Saviour from sin,
In a manger's straw, was laid.

No room for Him,
Blessed Saviour of men
Has the world. But in rapture I say,
"Come in, Lamb of God!
My Saviour, My God,
To my heart come Thou in and stay."
My peace by His pain,
His poorness all gain
To me, this Christmas Day.

—by John R. Rice

The Rough Cradle of Our King

(Continued from page 1)

recognized as a Roman province, but rather as a dependency, Herod was nominally king of Judea, but in fact he was only a viceroy and a Roman subject, who had to observe the edicts of Caesar. In order to give the appearance of independence, he recognized Jewish customs, and, therefore, in obeying the decree he issued an order that every family within his government should proceed for enrolment to the place where their respective genealogical records were kept. As both Mary and Joseph were of the lineage of David, in pursuance of Herod's order they proceeded to Bethlehem for registration.

Thus the edict of Augustus Caesar, issued when the world was at peace, and without any apparent reason for taking an enumeration (since the taxes were collected in Judea by Herod, who in turn paid the fixed tribute to Caesar), appears conclusively to have been an instrumentality of the Divine will. The birth of Jesus was so near at hand that God moved the Emperor of Rome to do one necessary thing that would fulfil the words of Micah.

In obedience to the order of Herod, Joseph and Mary made ready immediately for the journey to Bethlehem, which lies almost due south of Nazareth, their home.

The journey was completed without special incident of apostolic record, but upon reaching the ancient place of David, Mary and her husband found that so large a throng of strangers, brought together for the same purpose, had preceded them that all the public lodging places in the town of three thousand inhabitants were already occupied. What! no place to house the royal mother? No couch in which to lay the King of earth? No lords of the state awaiting in antechamber? No messengers mounted at the doorway ready to herald the advent from city to city? No satin-lined cradle to receive the infantile guest? No, none!

But humans must be sheltered as well as beasts. Some place must be found. If not among the lords, then among the lowly; if not among the lowly, then let

it be among the beasts, for these poor creatures will not refuse to share their quarters, even though they stand in narrow stalls and feed at the hands of those who begrudgingly give small allowances of food while taxing them to the limit of endurance. So Mary and Joseph, finding no welcome in either inn or cottage are forced to seek shelter among the beasts, to accept the discomforts of a stable even at a time the most critical, at the approach and at the fulfilment of motherhood. And in a stable among the asses, and cows, and the camels, while the air outside was disturbed by the vexatious cries of muleteers, hostlers and camel-drivers, Mary bowed herself and was delivered of her first-born, the joint-heir of God; the arch-King; a monarch upon whom the night pointed her bediamonded finger, while the door of heaven set wide open to give the angels sight of Him; and orchestral batons of light waved oratorios of the Messiah across the sky, and the minstrelsy of heaven flung out melodies of glory and good-will.

But while heaven was all aglow with joy, the Son of God was not yet raised from the straw in the manger where His mother had laid Him, covered with coarse linen. For her there was neither comfort nor privacy. A better adapted place hath the eagle in the eyrie, hath the whelp in the lion's lair. The exile of heaven lieth down upon the straw; the first night out from the palace of heaven, spent in an outhouse! One hour after laying aside the robes of heaven, dressed in a wrapper of coarse linen.

One would have supposed that Christ would have made a more gradual descent, coming from heaven first to a half-way world of great magnitude, then to Caesar's palace, then to a merchant's palace in Galilee, then to a private home in Bethany, then to a fisherman's hut, and last of all to a stable. No, no! It was one leap from the top to the bottom!

Let us open the door of the caravansary in Bethlehem and drive away the camels. Press on through the group of idlers and

herds by these inspiring words:

"FEAR NOT: FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU: YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER."

To the splendor of the holy messenger there suddenly flamed up a yet greater light, throwing its radiance higher in the sky, un-

til there was revealed to the startled shepherds the vision of a heavenly host, an angelic band raimented with an effulgence that flooded the fields afar, a constellation of immortals that bejeweled both earth and sky with an ineffable illumination; and from this holy choir there poured forth a song of triumphant joy, a chorus of blissful oblation, a symphony of rapturous pronouncement, an oratorio of doxology filled with glory and good will:

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND—ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."

RIDIN'... CUMBERWOOD Trails

With Evangelist Bill Rice

During the Christmas season last year our family went to Dallas to see my lovely wife's folks. And on Sunday we went with them to the large Baptist church they attend. I was invited to teach the men's class.

My lovely wife, Cathy, and Betty, our (then) seventeen year old daughter were in an adjoining class room. Betty is deaf.

"I hear Daddy speaking," Cathy said.

"How do you know it is Daddy?" Betty asked.

"Because I can recognize his voice," her mother answered.

Betty was surprised. "Does Daddy's voice sound different from other people's? Does his voice sound different from yours?"

Now it was my wife's turn to be surprised. "Of course it is different," she said. "We sound different just like we look different."

I was surprised, too, when Cathy told me about it later. Betty is as smart as she is pretty and it never entered my mind that she did not realize folks sound different. And yet she could not know, of course, unless someone told her for she is entirely deaf.

But there is a voice Betty hears. It is the voice of God. You see, we won her to Christ when she was just a little girl. (She reads lips well and knows the sign language, too, of course.) so, although she does not know the

voice of her earthly Father she knows the voice of her heavenly Father. But there are so many thousands of deaf boys and girls who do not know the voice of God. They have never been saved. They understand nothing about the Bible.

And the missionary purpose of Cumberwood, located on the Bill Rice Ranch, is to win deaf and handicapped youngsters to Christ. God has wonderfully blessed the work and last summer we not only had many happy conversions but closed the season with all bills paid—praise the Lord!

We are getting some behind financially now, though. Although our expenses during the rest of the year are nothing compared to the expenses during the summer, we still have monthly salaries, printing bills, upkeep, etc., to meet. Please stand by us, won't you? So many people seem not to care that there are several million deaf youngsters of school age in the U. S. but I believe the kind of folks who read this paper do care. And care enough to help. And we need help just now. Will you send an offering as God lays it on your heart? We will promptly acknowledge your gift with a receipt. Write me as God lays it on your heart,

Evangelist Bill Rice
Bill Rice Ranch
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
(Advertisement)

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Do you like to do things with other people? Why not take Bible Crossword Puzzle No. 2 in this issue of THE SWORD, and work it out with the whole family right after dinner this evening? Pull out your Bible and dictionary—we'll guarantee that even Dad will be racking his brain over some of these words!

For those of you who complete and turn in Puzzle No. 2 from this issue on time we will send FREE the wonderful 23-page booklet, *Pearls of Paradise*, by Clinton N. Howard which includes also the little story, *A Thrilling Christmas Time on the Frontier*, a true account as told by a pastor's wife. You will find this book especially sweet and helpful when read to the whole family, and the coming holidays will be more blessed and thankful to each of you.

Now here is the simple way to get this booklet:

1. Fill in the blanks of Puzzle No. 2 according to the clues given. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.
2. Mail to: PUZZLE EDITOR, The Sword of the Lord, Wheaton, Illinois. BE SURE TO PRINT YOUR OWN NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY ON THE ENVELOPE.
3. To receive *Pearls of Paradise*, your entry must be postmarked by midnight, Thursday, December 22, 1955. The answers to Puzzle No. 2 will appear in the December 30 issue of THE SWORD OF THE LORD.

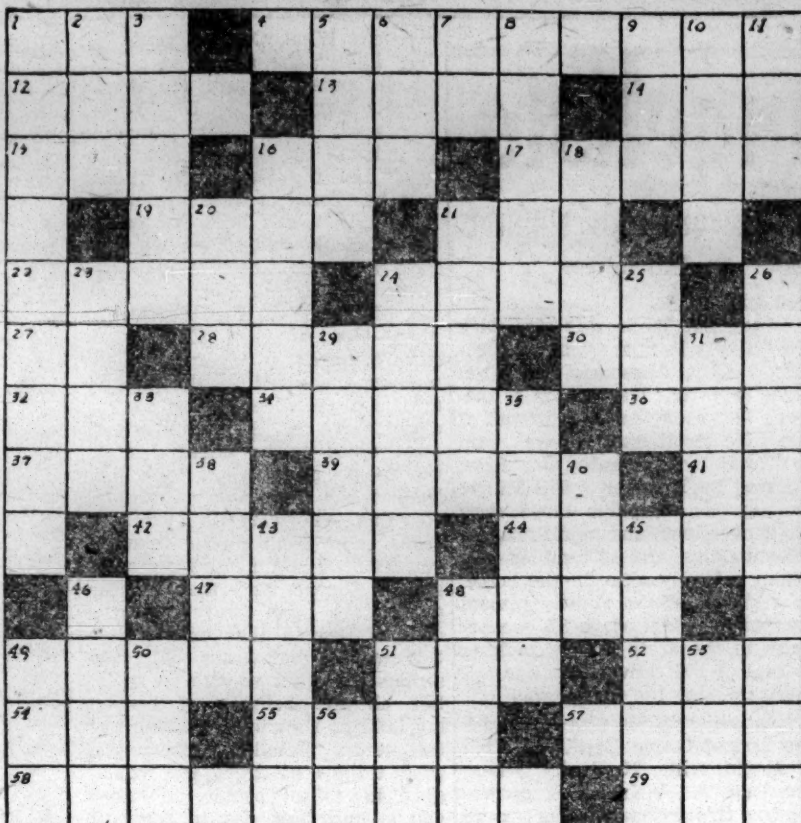
PUZZLE NUMBER 2

CLEWS ACROSS

- 1 Second son of Noah
- 4 King who reigned from India to Ethiopia
- 12 Son of Isaac
- 13 Son of Shobal
- 14 Material mined
- 15 Hang down
- 16 An insect; there was a plague (the fourth) of them, in Egypt
- 17 Country of the Medes
- 19 Comply. (I Sam. 15:22)
- 21 Hock
- 22 Ardent
- 24 Prophet who foretold the ruin of Nineveh
- 27 Islands lying between North and South America
- 28 Go in. (Ps. 100:4)
- 30 One-third of an ephah; about 1.4 peck
- 32 Wear away
- 34 The underworld
- 36 Five hundred, six
- 37 Where Hagar fled. (Gen. 16:7)
- 39 Serpent: sacred emblem on Egyptian monuments

CLEWS DOWN

- 41 Printer's measure
- 42 Wild hogs
- 44 Monk
- 47 Large, flightless bird of New Zealand; extinct
- 48 Half
- 49 Servant in a king's household. (I Sam. 8:13)
- 51 Fruiting spike of a cereal. (Ex. 34:21)
- 52 Profound reverence. (Ps. 4:4)
- 54 Blackbird
- 55 Acid
- 57 A son or daughter (Tagalog)
- 58 "An Israelite indeed." (John 1:47)
- 59 Tree
- 1 Esther
- 2 Good King of Judah
- 3 Son of Japheth
- 5 Hallowed
- 6 Some
- 7 Continent
- 8 City of Canaan—given to Asher. (Josh. 19:30)



- 9 Moses cast it on the ground and it became a serpent
- 10 Sacred symbol worn by priests. (Ex. 28:30)
- 11 Large body of water
- 16 Plants which produce no seeds
- 18 Birds
- 20 Insect.
- 21 Well in Canaan, where Gideon's army camped. (Judges 7:1)
- 23 Father of Rizpah, Saul's concubine. (II Sam. 3:7)
- 24 Necessities. (Luke 11:8)
- 25 Medium
- 26 Priest who gave David hallowed bread. (I Sam. 21:1)
- 29 Abraham's father. (Luke 3:34)
- 31 Declare in a positive manner
- 33 Receptacle
- 35 Sick man who was healed by Christ
- 38 Capital of Italy
- 40 Ancestor of David—seven generations back. (Ruth 4:19)
- 43 Main trunk of the arterial system
- 45 Greek goddess for whom Demetrius made silver shrines
- 46 Scene of a marriage and a miracle

- 48 Fruit of a tree which grows in the Holy Land
- 49 Public edict
- 50 Set of implements
- 51 Epoch
- 53 Existed
- 56 One

Answer to last week's puzzle:



With the Evangelists

(Continued from page 7)

port that our evangelist gave us in this matter.

"Also during the campaign we had a fifteen-minute radio broadcast on WCOJ, Coatesville, each evening at 6:10 p.m. This 5,000 watt station reached quite an area for us. We had full meetings just about every evening during the three weeks.

"After having taken count of the decisions made, we found that there were 96. 64 of these were in a special children's rally in which there were about 200 children present on the closing Saturday of the campaign. The other 32 occurred during the evening meetings, being mostly adults or older youth. The decisions were about 50 per cent first-time decisions and about 50 per cent rededications.

(This would mean there were approximately 48 conversions and 48 rededications in the meeting. Interest was high and a large attendance was reported.)

College Boy Writes About Habecker

Al Haffly, Jr., who is attending the King's College at Briarcliff Manor, New York, writes to say he noticed Ernie Habecker had been added to the Sword Staff of Evangelists. He writes, "I first met Ernie while a soldier in Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in November, 1953. There is a Christian fellowship center off the post where the soldiers are invited. Gospel meetings are heard here, and many soldiers have been won to Christ at this place. Ernie's group came from the Bible Baptist Church in Elkton, once a month, and whenever Ernie spoke, souls were saved. Of all the preachers at the center, I liked Ernie best. Right from the start I could tell that this young man should be out in evangelistic work."

DR. PETER RUCKMAN in August conducted evangelistic services

with the Lakewood Heights Interdenominational Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The pastor, Rev. Robert A. Welty, reports that there were 12 who trusted Christ as Saviour and 40 rededications, while one young man answered the call to preach and is preparing to go to school. There were 20 additions to the church.

Dr. Ruckman preached in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta and some 45 men indicated that they would accept Christ as Saviour.

DR. HYMAN APPELMAN of Box 8484, Kansas City 14, Missouri, writes of a blessed revival. "Three weeks in the Armory, Bel Air, Maryland, sponsored by the Upper Maryland Baptist Association, 523 on profession of faith and large numbers transfer membership. Many thanks for your prayers."

The First Baptist Church of Findlay, Ohio, just closed a successful evangelistic campaign under the direction of EVANGELIST RALPH M. DAVIDSON of Coffeyville, Kansas. The church had prayed for a revival, advertised a revival, expected a revival, and the pastor, Rev. Melvin O. Welch, writes, "we believe God gave us a revival." Several souls were saved, many confessions were made by Christians, and the church was spiritually refreshed. The general desire among the members is for Rev. Davidson to give the church a return engagement next spring.

The pastor continues, "I can heartily recommend this evangelist to any church desiring a man with no tricks, side attractions or flubdubs; only sincere Christ-centered and Church-centered preaching to both Christians and unsaved, and an interest and concern for the problems of the church."

EVANGELIST HUGH F. PYLE, 1721 So. Gordon St., S.W., Atlanta,

The Angel's Christmas Message

(Continued from page 1)

swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Ga., led revival services for 7 days November 14-20, in the Clarendon Baptist Church, Alcolu, S.C. Crowds were consistently good. Real revival was evident. 52 came for rededication or to be restored from backsliding during the revival and some 75 had already made such a decision under the leadership of the pastor on the day before the evangelist arrived. There were 26 or 27 saved during the 7 days. One man joined the church by letter and several young people surrendered their lives for service. Two high school teachers and a Catholic service man were among the converts. To God be the glory! Stacy Davis is the pastor of this unusual village church.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."—Luke 2:7-20.

I. THE ANGELS, HEAVENLY MESSENGERS

At the top of every Christmas tree, tradition says, there should be a large star or a bright shining angel. And in the minds of many, nothing will do but an angel. For the angels had so much to do with the birth of Christ and the Christmas story. A beautifully pictured angel seems to bring back some of the awe and mystery and miracle and joy of the first Christmas when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea.

1. Consider How Much the Angels Had to Do With the Birth of Christ

First, an angel of the Lord appeared on the right side of the altar of incense in the temple, before Zacharias the priest, and foretold the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Saviour.

Then the Angel Gabriel appeared in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth, to Mary, a virgin, engaged to marry Joseph and announced to her that she would miraculously conceive a son and bring forth Jesus, the Son of God.

Then the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream and comforted his troubled heart, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20, 21).

Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and announced the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, and then "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God . . ."

Again the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, warning him to take the baby Jesus into Egypt so Herod could not destroy Him. Later, when Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again in a dream, telling him to return with Mary and the baby Jesus into the land of Israel. Angels are everywhere in the Christmas story.

Small wonder, then, that angels are in Christmas carols. "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing."

Small wonder that angels appear in the pictures of the great artists who depict the sweet story of Joseph and Mary and the birth of the Lord Jesus, the story of Herod and the wise men and the shepherds.

2. There Is Wonderfully Sweet Comfort in the Obvious Lesson Here That Angels Are the Loving Friends of Mankind and Appear Continually to Long After Our Happiness and Joy

Strangely enough, men seem always afraid of angels. In the events connected with the birth of Jesus, angels, appearing to men, had first always to comfort people and quiet their fears. Listen to the words of the angel to Zacharias, to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds:

"Fear not, Zacharias . . ."—Luke 1:13.

"Fear not, Mary . . ."—Luke 1:30.

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not . . ."—Matt. 1:20.

To the shepherds: "Fear not"—Luke 2:10.

Angels are holy and beautiful creatures, with supernatural powers and wisdom. They are not sinful, as human beings are, and they are not limited, as we are. Angels are pure enough to dwell with God and serve Him. Angels ministered to Christ after His temptation; they strengthened Him in the Garden of Gethsemane after He had prayed. An angel came down from Heaven to roll back the stone from the door of the tomb of Christ at His resurrection and sat upon it. Two angels stood by the disciples at the ascension of Christ and promised His second coming. When Jesus comes to earth to reign, He will come with clouds and with all His holy angels, the Scripture says. There are many millions of angels; "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11). They do not marry. They were not born but were created. They never die. Some angels sinned and fell and are now fallen angels reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6). It seems that Satan himself was once an archangel, Lucifer, now fallen by his sin (Isa. 14:12).

Yet strangely enough, these marvelous heavenly beings were made for servants of the saints of God! Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Their business is to honor God in protection and care of His people, to please the Lord. Angels watch after us. Jacob in his dream saw a ladder and angels ascending and descending, going to and from Heaven in their business of watching after men and reporting back to God. Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." When Elisha and his servants were surrounded at Dothan by the armies of the king of Syria, chariots and horses of fire, manned, no doubt, by angels, but unseen to natural eyes, surrounded the city and protected the prophet of God. After Elisha's prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (II Kings 6:17). No wonder that Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (II Kings 6:16). The man of God is always surrounded by unseen angels.

Jesus said of little children that

"their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 8:10). Angels of God showed Hagar a well of water; fed Elijah on bread and water; blessed Jacob when he feared to meet Esau; appeared to Gideon and to Joshua to encourage them in the work of the Lord; kept the wicked prophet Balaam from his death by solemn warning; foretold to the mother and father of Samson the latter's birth. Angels are the friends of men.

I have no doubt that the stories of good fairies, once widely believed were but the fragmentary and traditional racial memories of the ministry of angels, more common before men went so far from God. Even heathen people have such twisted, handed-down traditions.

During World War I, thousands of soldiers told the story of the angel of Mons, France, who, they said, appeared and stopped the advance of the German armies.

Angels are the good friends of the people of God.

An angel came and opened the prison doors and released the apostles, encouraged them to go again to preach (Acts 5:19, 20). An angel released Peter from prison in answer to prayer, the night before he was to be put to death (Acts 12:5-11).

Angels took the spirit of the poor beggar Lazarus who died one night at the gate of the rich man, and the righteous soul of the beggar was carried to Heaven by a convoy of these heavenly messengers (Luke 16:22). Thousands of Christians on deathbeds have seen visions of angels, have heard heavenly singing and have been led by the loving, ministering, guarding angels into the presence of God!

In I Corinthians 11:10 we are told that women should not cut their hair but should have on their heads this God-given veil or covering, which is a symbol of obedience to husband and father, and that "because of the angels." Evidently angels themselves look with deepest concern upon the sins of any Christian. Possibly angels themselves might be tempted to the sin of rebellion by a rebellious spirit in a woman. At any rate, note how tenderly solicitous are the angels in their watch-care over the people of God!

3. How Fitting, Then, That Angels Should Take Such an Active Part in the Best Thing That Ever Happened for a Poor, Sinning, Fallen, Accursed Race!

How fitting that angels should gladly announce the coming of the Saviour! Do not ever make the mistake of thinking that this earth and its population are but an incident in the thoughts of God and the angels. Far from it! Scientists tell us that the earth is only one of the planets revolving around our sun, and that the earth is but a tiny pin point compared with the millions of suns, in countless galaxies of the heavens. But one soul is worth more than a solar system with its sun and planets and moons. The Bible plainly tells us that the sun is made to give light to the earth in the day, and the moon and stars to give light by night. The starry heavens, with their infinite masses and spaces, are incidental compared with this earth, relatively so much smaller. For on this earth God saw fit to put a race of people in His likeness, a race now fallen but infinitely loved. And the saving of human beings and the keeping and blessing of those saved is the greatest business that even God Himself in Heaven, and Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit and all the angels of God, can occupy themselves with! Up in Heaven their attention is centered primarily on earth. The angels share the loving compassion of Christ for sinners. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). How the angels delight to see sinners converted! And how lovingly they minister to the saved!

With these things in mind, it is easy to see that when Jesus came to earth to work out the redemption of sinners, it was the one matter nearest to the heart of every angel of God.

What a stir in Heaven! Long

ago, in the tents of Abraham, the servants must have talked much about the hope for the return of Eliezer who had gone to receive a bride for Isaac. How gladly they welcomed the lovely Rebekah to the tent of the lamented Sarah! So in Heaven, when Jesus was born on earth, all the angels of God knew that He had come to purchase Himself a bride, to redeem for Himself a people for His own endless praise and glory. Perhaps when an angel of the Lord told Zacharias that John was to be born and then the Saviour, every angel in Heaven wanted to have some part in telling men the great news. When the Angel Gabriel came back to report his conversation with Mary and an angel reported his comforting revelation to Joseph, all Heaven was in a hubbub, a flutter of joy! I can imagine that every angel of God pleaded: "Let me go! Let me tell it, or sing it, or only let me shine, but oh let me have a part in telling it!" Perhaps that is why when the one angel told his story to the shepherds, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13, 14). Every angel in Heaven wanted to have a part in the news of Christ's birth.

Oh, how the angels rejoiced that there would be a Saviour to save sinners!

II. THE THRICE BLESSED SHEPHERDS

Perhaps Caesar Augustus rested uneasily in his palace bed at Rome that night. He may have been loaded down with cares of state; he may have been fired with ambition for more authority, greater income, greater honor. He may have gone heavily to sleep after drunkenness and license. Who knows? Some unexplainable compulsion had urged him to decree that every family should go to their ancestral home to be registered for taxation. I suppose he never knew that the Saviour must be born in Bethlehem and that his decree had brought Mary and Joseph there to fulfill the Scriptures. And no angel with shining garment and glorious face slipped into the palace bedroom to tell the good news of the Saviour's birth to the emperor of all the world. No heavenly, glorious, vibrant light shined through the silken, lace-dressed curtains of the golden canopied bed where Caesar lay.

In the palace of the Roman governor in Jerusalem, brutal, grasping King Herod had no heavenly visitor on the Christ-child's natal night.

In the palace of the high priest, in the homes of the members of the Sanhedrin, no angelic messenger told the best news that the world had ever heard. Priests went dully, methodically about the rites and care of the temple and did not know that this night the Saviour was born who would fulfill every temple sacrifice, who would make good every glorious promise, a Saviour who would redeem His people Israel!

It was not to the mighty, not to the rich, not to the learned, but to the shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night that the angel of the Lord appeared. Blessed, blessed shepherds!

1. Christ Came to the Poor and Lowly

How fitting that good news of the Saviour's birth should first be announced to shepherds, common, unlearned, poor and lowly people!

Remember that Jesus in the beatitudes said, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:20, 21, 24, 25). The Gospel of Matthew gives these beatitudes in slightly different words. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:3-5).

It was prophesied of Jesus before He came that He would preach the gospel to the poor, and when John the Baptist sent to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus told the messengers to observe that "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:3, 5), as a proof that He was indeed the promised Redeemer, as John had announced Him to be.

It was not to the religious officials that Jesus was first made known but to the common man. Later, of Jesus it would be said, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:1, 2). Later it would be said of the Saviour upon this December night in Bethlehem, that "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

This Saviour was to be so approachable, so meek and lowly in heart that the poorest and the vilest could come to Him with assurance. Babies would cling to Him. The children would one day pave the road for his donkey steed with palm branches and shout, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:9). Zacchaeus, the despised publican, would seek Jesus and find Him. The woman taken in adultery would weep and call Him Lord as He forgave all her sins. The poor, despised sinner woman who had no other friends would weep over the feet of Jesus and wipe His feet with her hair and be forgiven. O thou blessed, approachable Jesus! O thou carpenter, thou poverty-stricken, despised and rejected Saviour!

I suppose the high and mighty would have had no time to visit a manger-cradle at midnight. These same cultured and wealthy and sophisticated people had had no room for Joseph and the baby's mother, so He was born on the straw of a stable. How fitting, then, that lowly shepherds should first be called to see the holy scene of the Son of God wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger!

Nor does this mean that the rich cannot come to Jesus. Abraham and David were rich. One is called the man after God's own heart, and the other the friend of God. We do not mean that the powerful and learned are not welcomed to adore the newborn Saviour. Queen Victoria stood as they first sang the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Oratorio, "The Messiah." And since that time cultured audiences everywhere stand during that Chorus to Christ as the coronation of a king. Gladstone, the prime minister, was a devoted defender of the faith in Christ. David Lloyd George, wartime premier, was a Baptist lay-preacher and loved the Saviour. Abraham Lincoln was converted while in the presidency and was a most devoted and humble man of prayer. "Stonewall" Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson were devoted Christians. The gospel is as good for a king as for a peasant, for a millionaire as for a pauper. But mark this fact—when the king comes to Christ, he must come as a peasant, and when the rich man comes, he must come as a pauper. When the high and mighty approach the Lord Jesus, they must become meek and lowly in heart! So Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

How blessed that the Saviour who was born in a stable should have His arrival first announced to humble shepherds in the fields, watching their flocks! Those who feel themselves great will not come to Him. Those who are self-satisfied and say that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," will not run to such a meek and lowly Saviour. But all who know themselves to be sinners and long to be pure; all who know themselves empty of righteousness but hunger to be filled; all those who want to come for mercy and pardon instead of singing their own praises, will find the Saviour approachable! The Saviour made the way easy for all mankind when He had His coming announced to the shepherds by campfire, among the huddled flock of sheep that winter night long ago.

2. The Announcement of the Saviour's Birth Was Made to the Believing, not to Scoffers!

In Luke 2:15 the beautiful child-like simplicity of the faith of these shepherds is shown. We are told: "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

The shepherds did not say, "What a strange, unlikely tale!" The shepherds did not argue about whether the virgin birth of Jesus, a miracle, was a biological possibility. No, they accepted the truth at once and said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." You remember the plain teaching of the Scripture that God has "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). How blessed are those spiritual babes who believe what God says! And how sad those sophisticated and arrogant scoffers who will believe nothing they have not seen or cannot explain, who judge everything by purely human and physical laws and make no room for God and miracles and spiritual truth!

If God were to work a miracle today in your town, you may be sure that very few would know it. When Jesus raised the twelve-year-old girl who had died, He shut out the official mourners and all the kinspeople and took the father and mother of the damsel, and Peter and James and John, behind closed doors to see her raised from the dead. When Peter raised Dorcas from the dead, he went in alone and shut the door and prayed. Only three people saw the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount and heard the voice of Moses and Elias as they talked with Jesus. When the Pharisees demanded that Jesus show them a sign, He refused, saying no sign should be given them but the sign of the resurrection (Matt. 12:39). When Herod commanded Jesus to work a miracle, Jesus said not a word (Luke 23:8, 9). You see, miracles are for people who believe in them. A Saviour is for people who know they need a Saviour. The good news of the gospel is not good news to anybody except those who believe it.

We may be sure, then, that it was the believing hearts of these shepherds that made them fit subjects for the mighty revelation of this first Christmas announcement by the angel. I have no doubt that learned Sadducees who believed neither in miracles nor angels, missed entirely this glorious announcement and the angelic song that blazed from the sky over the fields. Sadducees did not look for a Saviour, would not have believed the message, would have explained away the appearance of the heavenly beings. If Jesus were to be born today, no Unitarian, no modernist, no evolutionist, no doubter of the Word of God would be in the fortunate group to be visited by the angels and told of the Redeemer's birth! But to some lowly, Bible-believing, hungry-hearted and longing soul, the glad news would be brought. How sorry I am for those who have, by their unbelief, turned out from the radio of their minds all heavenly melodies, all glorious promises of the Saviour! How sad and how poor are those who are slow to believe! I do not wonder that later Jesus, after His resurrection, said to those who did not believe He was raised from the dead: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26). Those who are fools and slow of heart to believe will have no real Christmas this year nor any other year. All the Christmas carols, all the brightly lighted Christmas trees, all the sweet greetings of friends and loved ones, all the feasting at loaded tables are more or less empty forms to those who do not believe that Christ is the virgin-born Saviour and who have not trusted Him to save their own souls and given peace to their own tired and wretched hearts.

3. The Angel's Announcement Was an Invitation to Those Who Would Accept It

Luke 2:16 says about the shepherds, "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

I am glad the shepherds went to see the baby Jesus! I am sure that the sheep rested untroubled and that not a wolf got a lamb that night as the shepherds left their flocks to see the longed-for and long-awaited Saviour! I think one reason that these shepherds were selected to hear the announcement was that God knew they would take time to go see the baby Jesus for themselves.

So many of God's offers of mercy are spurned. God has given a Bible, and people will not believe it. God has sent prophets and preachers, and people did not hear them. God has offered salvation, and people rejected it. God sent His Son, and not a home nor a hotel in Bethlehem had room for Him to be born! I can well understand how God would want, this time, to tell somebody who would count it good news, who would believe it, and who would quickly come to rejoice over the baby Jesus. Later the wise men would come from the East to bring their gold, frankincense, and myrrh and worship the Saviour. But all the heavenly hosts of angels had hearts bursting with praise that Christ had condescended to take on Himself the form of man and live and die for man's sins. This night it seems there had to be somebody to come to look into that holy baby's face with adoration. This birthnight, it seems that there had to be somebody to receive with suitable gladness and praise the gift God had given. And so God had the angels tell these shepherds who would go at once to see the baby Jesus.

When Jesus later rode on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He said about the shouting, praising children: "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40). And when Jesus died, the rocks rent and the earth trembled and graves were opened and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. There are certain divine events that could not be commonplace, and it seems that the earth itself would be rent asunder if someone did not recognize the mighty hand of God made bare. And the night when Jesus was born, was a night for praise. The angels had to tell someone. So they told these believing shepherds who would go to see the Saviour.

Dear Friend who reads these words, are you one who has heard the good news but did not accept it? Have you been told of the Saviour's birth but you have not come to see Him, to love Him and trust Him and receive Him for your own? Oh, hasten then to Jesus and see for yourself that what all the angels said is true! The praises of saints and martyrs, priests and prophets, are justified. This happy Christmas season, go for yourself to look in the manger; see the face of the baby Jesus. And there you will find yourself looking into the tender, broken heart of God who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." In that manger where the baby lay that day, the believing heart could see the coming of Calvary and a Saviour slain on a cross that we sinners might believe and be saved.

It is no Christmas where people talk about Jesus but do not love Him. It is no Christmas where people celebrate a day without knowing Jesus as their own Saviour. Away with the folly, the hypocrisy, the false tinsel of the commercialized Christmas without a Saviour! Make sure that this Christmas you come to the Saviour for yourself and know Him and trust Him and go away with His peace and joy, yea, with the Saviour Himself in your heart forever!

4. The Shepherds Spread the Glad Tidings

Luke 2:17-20 tells us in thrilling words the reaction of the shepherds after they had hurried to the stable and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in the manger; "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the

saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

These glad shepherds "made known abroad" what the angel had told them about the baby Jesus. They returned, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

It was not a bad investment when the joyous angel appeared to the shepherds to reveal the birth of the Saviour. How many Christians there are who have heard the glad news themselves but have never told it to anybody! There is something wrong and wicked about learning good news intended for the whole race and keeping it for one's self only. The angel had told them that the glad tidings of great joy should be to all people, so they gladly went forth to tell what they had heard and seen.

"Go tell" is the very heart of all Christian duty. After one meets Jesus the command is always to go and tell. When the Gadarene demoniac was wonderfully healed and sat, clothed, and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus, he wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus refused him, saying, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19). And that great sinner, now saved, departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel."

Jesus was deeply grieved when He healed ten lepers only one of them, a Samaritan, returned to give Him praise (Luke 17:12-18).

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came the first Easter dawn and found an empty tomb, the angel, with a face like lightning and raiment white as snow, led the women gently to see the place where Jesus had lain and then said, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead..." (Matt. 28:7).

When Jesus healed the poor woman who had been afflicted with an issue of blood twelve years and had spent all of her living upon physicians but was humanly incurable, He demanded that she stand out and tell the assembled crowd for what cause she had touched Him and how she had been healed. You see, there is a fundamental duty to share a blessing which is intended for all. The shepherds would have been guilty and wicked had they withheld the glad news of the Saviour's birth, since He was born for others too.

Do you remember the four lepers who sat outside the gates of the city of Samaria when it was besieged by the Syrians? Starving, in utter despair, they said, "Why sit we here until we die?" So in a boldness born of despair they went into the camp of the enemy, the Syrians, and there they found that God had so frightened the Syrians that they had run away leaving the tents full of food, with meals prepared, and had strewn their garments even to the Jordan River in their haste. And then we are told how these starving lepers feasted and then told others. "And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household" (II Kings 7:8,9).

Those lepers were right. They said, "If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us." God will punish wicked people who withhold the blessing which was intended for others, too. The lepers carried the message to the starving, besieged city, and all were fed because the lep-

ers feasted themselves and carried the good tidings that other starving souls might feast, too.

Can you imagine these happy shepherds telling of the birth of the Saviour? I suppose they rushed first to their own homes and awakened wives and children, brothers and sisters, and told them, "The Saviour is born! We saw with our own eyes. The angel of the Lord appeared to us in the field and told us that we should find Him in a manger in Bethlehem. Then all the sky was filled with singing, praising angels. He is the Saviour, and this is the best news the world ever heard!" I think they told of the beauty of the baby. I have no doubt they marveled and told of the joy of salvation from sin that came into their own hearts as they believed the good news of the angel.

And it is well to note that these shepherds just continued to praise and glorify God. They did not so much go to tell the story as a matter of duty, I imagine, as the simple outpouring of their joy. They were glad and they could not keep silent. They were like Jeremiah, with a fire in his bones, like Paul who said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16). They were like the Apostles Peter and John after Pentecost, who said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

Dear Christian, I suggest that if you find it difficult to testify for the Lord Jesus and what He has done for you, you have lost some of the wonder and joy that should be in your heart. Perhaps you have lost your first love. The gospel should be as sweet to you in the telling as it should be to the sinner who hears. Go back to the place of quiet waiting on God! Make sure that the joy of the Lord is fresh in your own heart. Like the Psalmist of old, get an anointing of fresh oil. Muse and meditate in the secret place until the fire burns warm in your own heart again. Count your blessings and praise God until your heart overflows. And then praise will be natural and sweet to you, and believable and interesting to your hearers.

At this Christmas season people talk about gifts and travel and visiting and fellowship, but too often words of praise for God come only haltingly from our lips. Too often even Christian people tell lying tales about Santa Claus and reindeer instead of rejoicing together over the work of the Saviour. Oh, God open the fountains of praise in our hearts! Oh, for the glad testimonies of people who have such joy that they cannot be silent about the Saviour!

III. THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGEL

Now we come to the Christmas message itself. Here we find why Christ came to earth. Here we learn the message we are to preach. In Luke 2:10,11 we learn the angel's message: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

1. First of All, This Message Is "To All People," That Is, to the Whole World

The message the angel gave the shepherds is the same message God has for the world nineteen and a half centuries later.

The message the angel gave to the lowly shepherds is the same message He has for all society. "God so loved the world," the whole wide world, every one of the billions of souls ever born in the world, that He gave Jesus to be born at Bethlehem and to die at Calvary.

Here is the Great Commission announcement of the angel in the field near Bethlehem, just as true as Jesus gave it to the disciples after His resurrection. We have a message to tell to the nations; and no Christian has done his duty until he does all he can to see that the last creature on earth hears the gospel. The angel's message is as much for one who reads these words today as for the shepherds in the field that starry Christmas night! The Saviour wants to be your Saviour. He wants the joy to be your joy.

2. It Is as a Saviour for Sinners That Jesus Came

The angel said, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour!"

Jesus did not come as a teacher, though often he taught the people and "He spake as never man spake." The world has other teachers, even other teachers sent from God, like the holy men who wrote the Scripture, and all of God's prophets. But Jesus did not come as a teacher. He came as a Saviour. In I Timothy 1:15 the Apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, writes, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief." And Jesus Himself said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus said plainly that God's love gift to the world was in order "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus did not come as a teacher, a philosopher, but to save people from their sins. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God," Jesus abruptly answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:2, 3). What Nicodemus needed was not a teacher but a Saviour. He did not need a pattern he needed a Redeemer.

Jesus did not come to civilize the world, to change society as a whole, to stop wars and crime and poverty. The modernists who leave off revivals, who stop having supernatural conversions, and talk piously of the church "bringing in the kingdom of God," have utterly missed the point of the gospel, the point of Jesus' coming. Jesus came to save individual sinners from Hell. He came to make black hearts white in the blood, came to give new life to those dead in trespasses and sins. Joseph was told by the angel, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit and with the baby John in his arms, prophesied, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:76, 77). The angel announced to the shepherds, and we should always emphasize his message that "unto you is born... a Saviour."

It is true that Jesus Christ and Christianity have been the greatest influence for civilization in all the world. Regenerated Christian hearts live as unsaved men cannot live. Men who are born again, saved by the blood of Christ, have done all the best of the world's literature, and art, and culture. Genuine Bible-believing Christianity has mothered education, has sent missionaries around the world to civilize while they preach the gospel. Bible-believing Christianity as held by saved, forgiven, born-again sinners, has founded orphanages and hospitals, has sponsored peace movements, has taught the protection of the weak and the care of the helpless, and has earnestly and powerfully preached moral righteousness. But the first and most important thing that Jesus does for anybody is to save his soul, forgiving his sins and changing his heart.

And it is very important to remember that all the changes made in human society by Christianity and the gospel were made by the old, old gospel, not by the modern so-called social gospel of unbelievers and infidels who reject the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible. Modernists save no drunken bums on the Bowery in New York City. They cannot change individuals from sinners to saints. Modernists do not change society because they do not change the human heart. These unbelievers in the church have only the carnal mind which is enmity against God and cannot be subject to the law of God because of spiritual blindness. That is why they try to change men without regeneration. That is why they try to change society without changing men. That is why modernists and liberals blindly swallow the propaganda of Com-

munist and foolishly try to involve the church in consumer co-operative ventures, in a fight against free enterprise, and co-operate with infidels to exchange God's plan of free enterprise for socialism.

The name of Jesus means Saviour, and Jesus came to save. No one really has Jesus until he has Him as a Saviour in his own heart and has his own sins forgiven and his soul saved.

The most important thing for each reader this Christmastime is that he may make sure that he has come to Jesus as a poor lost sinner needing saving and that by faith he has accepted and received Jesus into his own heart as the Forgiver of his sins, the Pardoner of his transgressions, the Saviour of his soul.

3. The Child Born Is Christ the Lord, God Incarnate

The baby Jesus was not like other babies in one respect. This baby is God come in human form! Here is the Creator of the world wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger! For the angel took pains to say that this Saviour born in the city of David "is Christ the Lord." Jesus is the Christ of the Old Testament, foretold as the anointed One (Messiah) of the second Psalm. He is the Seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, of Genesis 3:15. He is the Prophet like unto Moses of Deuteronomy 18:15. He is the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, on whom the Lord has laid all our iniquities and by whose stripes we are healed. He is the Lamb that Abraham said God would provide Himself for a burnt-offering (Gen. 22:8). In fact Christ is the object pictured in all the sacrifices: the lamb, the ram, the scapegoat, the red heifer, the bullock, the turtle-dove, the pigeon. The blood of all the bulls and goats pictured the Lamb of God which should take away the sin of the world. Jesus is the High Priest pictured by Melchisedec, the king of Salem. Jesus is the Son given, upon whose shoulders shall rest the government of the world when David's throne is restored at Jerusalem. "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). I say, the baby Jesus was not born as are other babies. He had no human father. For the angel had said unto Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). And the angel said unto Joseph, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20,21). And we are told that all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, chapter 7 verse 14, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

And we may be sure that when the shepherds gazed into the baby face of Jesus they looked with awe. Doubtless they knelt and worshipped Him as did the wise men. For He is Immanuel, God with us, Christ the Lord. There is no real Christmas for anyone who does not admit that Jesus is God and who does not bow to Him as Lord.

I believe that the shepherds went away after perfect surrender of hearts to this message, this Christ, this Lord. They ignored their defenseless flocks in the field to tell the good news. I think their hearts had knelt to Jesus. I think their wills had surrendered to Him. I think they had taken Him into the throne room of their hearts to be the Lord of their lives. And that is what I hope every reader will do this Christmastime. Let Jesus sit with you at the Christmas feast; yes, let Him be verily the head of the house. Let Jesus preside at the Christmas tree and make sure that every gift and every carol and all the fellowship is subject to His approval and controlled by His will.

I wish my knees could bow in that lowly stable before the manger today! I long to give myself anew to the Lord Christ who came that happy night. Let us not only trust Jesus as Saviour but let us surrender to Him and exalt Him as Lord and Master, as Christ and God. Have thy blessed way with our hearts, O Christ Jesus, this Christmastime and forever!

GO MEET THE SAVIOUR TODAY

It was wonderful news that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem. But the angel gave specific instructions as to how they should find and know the baby Jesus. "And this shall be a sign unto you," the angel said, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). And sure enough, "They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" (Luke 2:16). What a pity to hear about Jesus and never know Him as - your Saviour! How sad these shepherds would have been in after life if they had not come to see for themselves the babe in the manger of whom the angel had told them!

Well, it is Christmastime and in many ways that is the happiest time in the world to accept Christ as your own Saviour. He is God's "unspeakable gift," given to a sinning, dying world, given to you. It is not good manners to reject a Christmas gift. When a gift has cost love and care and great expense, it would be a callous heart indeed that would refuse it and break the loving heart of the giver. But God offers you His own Son. God let Him die on the cross for your sin. Jesus Himself is God's Christmas gift and He brings with Him forgiveness and peace of mind, and a new life within and the great and sure hope of eternal blessedness hereafter. Everlasting life is yours as a free gift if you will take it today.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). And again we are told in I John 5:11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

God furnishes the Saviour free. All you need to do is to furnish the sinner. Are you willing to confess yourself a sinner and come to Christ for salvation? Are you willing to receive Him into your heart today? The very moment that you open your heart and trust Him to forgive your sins and take Him as your own Saviour He will come in and make you God's child and give you everlasting life.

If you will take Christ as your own Saviour, I am anxious to hear from you. First say "Yes" in your heart to God. Honestly surrender yourself to Christ, and trust Him to be your own Saviour. Then would you sign the statement below as a covenant between you and God? Then copy the letter, if you will, and mail it to me. I will rejoice with you in your salvation and will send you a letter of comfort and counsel. Oh, I hope to hear from many of you who take Christ as Saviour just here and now as you read this message from God. Here is the statement; will you honestly decide today and sign your name to it, taking Christ as your own Saviour this Christmastime?

Evangelist John R. Rice
214 West Wesley Street
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Dr. Rice:

I have read your Christmas message, "The Angel's Christmas Message." I realize I have been a poor lost sinner. I thank God that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to be a Saviour. So at this glad Christmastime I here and now accept Jesus as my Saviour. I repent of my sins and trust Him to save my soul. With all my heart, this moment, I invite Jesus into my heart and turn myself over to Him and claim Him as my Saviour. I write you as my confession of faith in Christ. I will claim Him as my Saviour and try to live for Him the rest of my life.

Signed _____

Address _____

Great News!

(Continued from page 1)

have to stand in pulpits Sunday after Sunday to proclaim that Gospel if the people believed it?

You don't have to urge men to believe good news. We like to believe good news, but men do not believe it. They think it is bad news that Christ came into the world to redeem it. John testified that God sent Christ into the world to save it. That is what He came for. He came to deliver men from sin. He came for the recovery of sight to the blind. He came to set at liberty them that were bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He came to bring salvation into this world; yet men do not believe it. But the moment that a man's eyes are opened and he sees really Christ's mission in its true light and he begins to realize what Christ came to do, and that truth dawns upon him, then it is the best news that ever fell upon his ear. I believe no better news ever came out of Heaven than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe no better news has ever fallen upon the ears of men than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No news like this—and there never will be any news like it—a Saviour is born unto you.

Good News of Death Conquered

And now I want to tell you why the Gospel is good news—that is, why it is good news to me. It has taken out of my path the very bitterest enemies I have ever had. Now, you may talk as much as you are a mind to about death not being an enemy, but death is an enemy, and death is a bitter enemy to the human race; and while we are gathered in this meeting today it may steal into our dwellings and take away the dearest friend we have on earth. It may take the wife of your bosom; it may take the children who are now full of glee and full of joy at the anticipation of

Christmas coming; and you may go home and find that death has entered into your dwelling and thrown a dark shadow across your path, and thrown a blight across your threshold. Death is an enemy, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ tells me that that very enemy has been conquered.

When Christ came into the world, He met Death, and He conquered him. I remember when I was a boy, I used to look upon death as the most horrid monster that ever was in the world. I remember the first time I put my hand on the forehead of a corpse. How quick I drew it back, and what a cold chill went right to my heart.

In the town where I was brought up it used to be the custom, when a man or woman was buried, to toll out their ages. If they were seventy or eighty years old, there would be seventy or eighty strokes of the bell. I always used to count the strokes of that bell, and I used to say when a person died away off there: Death is a good way off, and it will be a long while before it will ever take me. But then sometimes it would come down among the teens and take a child of my age, and that would bring death a little nearer home, and I would say: It may come and take me in my childhood. Many a time I have lain awake in my bed thinking of death. I used to think it was a horrid enemy, but do you know that is all gone now? That is all gone to a believer. As you go on through life you may shout, now, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And you hear a voice coming down from the cross of Christ—rolling down through the centuries—"Buried in the bosom of the Son of God." He took the sting of death into His own bosom. He tasted death for every man. What is it that makes death so bitter? It is sin. And if Christ has borne the penalty of death, if He has taken our sins on Himself and borne them away on the tree, we have the victory over death. Death is a conquered enemy—is a conquered foe.

The Grave Is Robbed of Victory

Well, then, I used to think there was the grave. I used to think I could not go to the grave and lay away a loved one. It seemed as if I hadn't the power, that I hadn't grace enough to go to the narrow house appointed us to die in, and lay away a loved one. But, don't you know, as I look into the grave now, I can think Jesus Christ has been down in that grave and He has measured its depth; that He has lain there Himself.

It was not that death took Christ into the sepulcher, but He went down into the sepulcher Himself after death. He went down there to conquer death and to conquer the grave, and to rob the grave of its victory, and that is what Paul meant when he shouted, "O grave, where is thy victory?" The Son of God had robbed the grave of its victory. He went down into the grave, and Jesus bound death hand and foot, and came up out of the grave, and brought up a few released captives to be the witnesses of the victory He had won; or, as Christmas Evans said, He took possession of the whole territory when He went into Joseph's sepulcher, and so the grave now is conquered. It may have this body—this house that I live in, but I am going to gain something even by the grave. If it is sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory. If it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. If it is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption. If it is sown a mortal body, it shall be raised an immortal.

You see we are going to gain something by death. We are going to get the victory over death and the grave. That is what the Gospel brings us. Isn't that good news? It is astonishing how men go to sleep over the Gospel. It is astonishing how little some men care for it, when these enemies are in the path of every man that treads this earth. He knows it is only a little while, it is only a few shadows, and it is gone. It is only a few breaths, and it is gone. It is but a vapor, life is; it is but a shadow; it is but a cloud; it is but an inch of time, and then the eternal ages roll on.

But then if we are in Christ, we have the victory. Death has had his hand on Christ once; he will never have his hand on Him again. 'I am He that shall live. Behold, I live forevermore.' He lives; and if I have Christ, death cannot touch that new life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If I have Christ formed in me, the hope of glory, death cannot touch that. He may have the old Adam life; I don't care for that; it is not worth having; it is forfeited; it is gone any way; but we have a new life, and that is the good news.

Good News of Sins Forgiven

Well, then, the other enemy, and that is sin. I used to think it would be an awful time when a man had to render an account of his sins; but do you know the Gospel tells me that if I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that out of love to me He has just taken all my sins and cast them behind His back—behind God's back. It is a safe place, isn't it, to have our sins? Not behind our backs, because the Devil would get behind our backs and bring them all out again to torment the lives nearly out of us with our sins; but God has taken them and cast them behind His back. How is the Devil to get at them? You may challenge the Devil to find your sins if God has put them away; if God has washed them away they are clean gone; if God has buried our sins they are buried so deep that they will never have a resurrection. No fiend of Hell, no Devil can find our sins when God buries them. When God forgives a man, when God justifies a man, he is justified; if God puts away our sins they are put away forever; that is what the Gospel tells me. Isn't that good news? Isn't that worth hearing? Isn't it good news to be told you have had your sins put away; that you have had them blotted out for time and eternity? God says, "I will blot them out as a thick cloud."

During the past month we have seen a good many clouds in St. Louis, but suppose we get up tomorrow morning and there isn't a cloud to be seen; can you find one? Can you see one after it is vanished? We have seen a good many during the past month, but when once a cloud is blotted out, is there a philosopher on earth who can find it? God says, "I will blot them out as a thick cloud;" and if God has blotted out our sins, who is going to find them? That is what the Gospel tells me; Isn't that good news? To think that they are blotted out, and not only that, but God says, "I won't remember them." That is a most wonderful thing. God forgets them.

Now, you know some men say, "Oh, I—I will forgive you, but I won't forget this." Some men will forgive, but they won't forget; but God not only forgives, but forgets. Do you know what forgiveness is? It is putting a thing away as if it had never happened. Do you know what justification is? It is putting man back as if he had never sinned; that is justification. It's a great thing to be justified in the sight of God; it's a great thing for God to justify a sinner, and it is the best news a man can hear. What better news can a man hear? Dr. Ganse (turning to Dr. Ganse, who occupied a seat on the platform), do you know any better news than that; that to have all the sins that you have committed from the cradle up blotted out and put behind God's back out of sight—put away? God says He never will remember them.

Well, that enemy is gone. Sin is out of the way, and what an enemy it is. How it has cursed this earth; how it has broken up families; how it has ruined households. But God came down to the earth, and He says: "Out of love to your soul I forgive you, if you will believe on my Son; if you will take Him."

Glad Tidings of Judgment Removed

Well, the next enemy is judgment. And I used to think it would be a terrible hour when we would stand before God and have all the sins that we had commit-

ted from childhood up all blazoned out before the assembled universe; sins that we had committed in secret; sins that we committed in childhood—all of them. But do you know that blessed Gospel tells me that Jesus Christ went into judgment for me, and I don't have to go there for sin? Says Paul, "Know ye not that He shall judge the world?" We are going to be brought to judgment for rewards and stewardships, and every man is to give an account for the deeds done in the body. That is written to the church and to believers, but we are not going to be brought to judgment for sin. Why? Because Christ was judged for us. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," and, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

If Christ bore them I don't have to bear them, do I? Is God going to demand payment twice? If I owe a man \$500 and I am poor, bankrupt, and can't pay him a dollar, and Dr. Ganse comes and pays that \$500 and gets a receipt in full and hands it to me, can that debtor collect that money from me? Is there any court in Christendom that will make me pay that if another has paid it for me? Jesus Christ has paid the debt. He took my place when He died on Calvary. He was the sinner's substitute; He died in our stead; He that knew no sin became sin for us, and upon the sacrifice of Himself has put away our sins.

Now you see we are not going to come to judgment for sin; that is passed; that is behind us; grave, sin, and judgment are all behind us. So we can enjoy Christmas if we have Christ; and a man who does not have Him, I don't see how he can enjoy it. It seems to me like mockery for a man to rejoice over a rejection of the Son of God; rejecting Him who came into the world to save it; rejecting a Saviour who came into the world to bless it; rejecting a Saviour who came into the world to blot out our sins and our iniquities.

How Simple the Way of Salvation

Now there may be some here today who would like to know just how they can become Christians, and enter into the joy of a Christian life, so that they may have a real true Christmas gift. I will tell you. It is very simple. It is so simple that I am afraid you will stumble over it. I have sometimes wished that I could make the plan of salvation as simple as it really is. If I could only command language to make it as simple as it really is, I sometimes think that I would not preach but just one sermon, and I would just go up and down Christendom and tell it to the world. It seems to me that we sort of mystify it when we explain it, and that we cannot make it as plain as it really is, and the world stumbles over the very simplicity of it.

Now, it is said, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." It is a gift. Is there a person in this audience who does not know how to take a gift? I venture to say there is not a man or woman in this audience who will not receive a gift in the near future. Do you know how you will take it? You will just take it—that is all; if it is only offered to you, you will just take it—that is all. It would be an absurd thing for me to stand here and undertake to explain to you how you would take a Christmas gift, wouldn't it? I see some of you smiling in contempt. Now you think I am talking as though I was talking to little children; but I tell you that we have to get down and preach to men like little children, because we just mystify the plan of salvation.

There was a teacher in a Sunday School one Sunday who just took out his watch and said to one of the scholars in his class, "I will give you that watch if you will take it." And the first boy grinned and laughed and wouldn't take it; he thought the other boys would make fun of him if he did, so he wouldn't take it; then the teacher offered it to the next boy

(Continued on page 12)

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News Notes

(Continued from page 5)

in a three-to-two vote had ruled the bylaw and the provincial statute constitutional.

The nine members of the Supreme Court, three Roman Catholics and the other Protestants, issued three statements giving reasons for their judgment. All were to the same effect: that provincial statute enters the realm of criminal law, which Canada's constitution entrusts to the Dominion Parliament.

Justices Roy L. Kellock, C. H. Locke and Ivan Rand also stated that the provincial statute relates to religion, another matter under Dominion jurisdiction.

The Montreal stores were Eaton's, Holt Renfrew, Birks, Mappin's, Ogilvy's, Simpson's and Morgan's, among the largest retail outlets in the city.

Their counsel argued that the bylaw was a mask to enforce religious observance of the Roman Catholic church feasts.

Armand Primeau, Montreal municipal clerk, said about 2,500 cases pending against stores which remained open will be dropped.
(ERA-11/9/55)

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Great News!

(Continued from page 11)

in the class and he wouldn't take it; and he went on and offered it to every boy in the class until he came to the very last one; and he offered it to him and the little fellow at the foot of the class reached out his hand and took the watch and put it in his pocket; and the teacher said, "It is yours." The rest of them said, "You didn't really mean it; you didn't really mean to give it to us, did you?"

And the teacher said, "Yes."
"Did you really offer it to us?"
"Yes."

"Well," they said, "we didn't believe it; if we had, we would have taken it."

And so when we are offered the gift of Christ, we find that people act just that way—"You don't really mean what you say, do you, that we are all saved at once; that all we have to do is to take it—just to take the gift; just to take Christ and be saved?" Oh, yes, I mean that. "Do you mean that? Well, I don't think we can be saved that way; I don't think it is true; I don't think a man can be saved that easy." And people go off without the gift.

Now, you can take God's gift before you go out of this house, and it is worth more than all the Christmas gifts that you will get; it is worth more than all the gifts the world can give. Think of eternal life, a life without end! Think of God offering that! Yet He just comes down and offers it to every one who will take it today. Don't say that you can't take it. God does not offer a man a gift and then not give him the power to take it. That would be an unjust God. But with the gift comes power, and when God commands you to believe on His Son, and commands you to receive His Son

as His gift to you, He gives you the power to take Him, and you can take Him if you will. Christ says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." It is not because men can't come, but because they won't. It is this "will." The battle is fought on that one word, "will." "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Just Take Him

Now, take Him; as you sit in that pew say, "Lord Jesus, I take Thee as God's gift to me." "And unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour." Paul says, "He gave him up freely for us all." God gave Christ to me as much as to Paul. He gave Christ to this reporter as much as to any minister on this platform. He gave Him freely for us all. I thank God it is a universal Christ to a universal world. It is Christ offered freely to the whole world, and we have either to receive or to reject.

Now, if a man offered me a gift I would have to do one of two things. I would have to reject the gift or receive it—wouldn't I? I couldn't do both. I couldn't receive and reject it—could I? I must do one of two things. The mind must be brought into play, into action, and I don't see why it doesn't take the same will power to reject Jesus Christ that it does to receive Him. And people that reject Him every day, why are they not bringing the will power to bear on that very thing? Now, instead of willing tonight that you will not receive Him as God's gift to you, as your Lord and Master, as your Saviour, just will that you will have Him. You say, "What is the first step?" The first step is to make up your

mind that you will have Him. "What is the second step?" It is to take Him. That is the second step. "Well, then, what must I do?" Then live for Him. Just thank God for sending Jesus Christ to this world. Begin today to thank Him. That is a way to spend Christmas—to thank God for sending Christ into the world.

As I got up this morning the first thought that came to my mind was, "O God, I thank Thee for sending Christ into this world." How it has lit up my little home. How my children are filled with joy that Christ came. And the best thing you can do today is to receive Christ and then thank God for sending Him; and then there will be light, peace, and joy; all of these blessings will come right into your heart.

You say, "What am I going to do with all the sins I have committed?" Give them up. The only thing in the world that you have and that God does not have is your sins, and the only thing that God wants is your sins; and the moment you will give them up, the moment you do that, God will take your sins. Now, one of the hardest things that men find to do in this life is to become Christians, and yet is one of the easiest. You say that is a plain contradiction. I mean what I say. It is one of the hardest things men have to do to become Christians, and it is one of the easiest things.

A Matter of the Will

A few years ago I was at Chicago, and my sister-in-law had a little child, a nephew of mine; and he took my Bible one day and threw it upon the floor, and his mother said: "Charlie, you must go and pick up uncle's Bible," and the little fellow, only two years old, said: "I won't." The mother looked at him with amazement. "Charlie, where did you learn that naughty word?" There

didn't anyone have to teach him; it sprang up in his heart; you don't have to teach a child those kinds of things.

She thought at first that he didn't know what it meant, but she soon found out that he knew very well; not only that, but he had made up his mind that he wouldn't pick up the book. Now she says, "Charlie, you will have to pick up that book, if you don't mama will punish you." The little fellow looked at her to see if she really meant it. "Yes," she says, "mamma will punish you." I was interested in the fight. I knew if she didn't break his will that he would break her heart. It was only a question of time. It was her first child, and I wanted to see that young mother conquer that will, and I watched the progress of the conflict; and finally he looked at her and he saw by her eye that she was going to punish him; she had never punished him before; and then he got up and looked very serious; and when he saw that she was really going to punish him, then he said that he would like to do it, but he couldn't. You laugh at it. Don't laugh at it, for that is yourself. You say you would like to become a Christian, but you can't. That is just false.

You can if you will. I don't know but the little fellow reasoned himself into the belief that he couldn't pick that book up. But finally he got down and put both arms around the book and said he couldn't lift it; a great healthy boy, but he couldn't lift that book: he would like to, but he couldn't lift it; and he got up without it. And finally his mother says, "Charlie, you must pick up that book;" it was hard for him to do it; but at last she broke his little will; and the moment his will was broken he bent his back and picked up the book as easily as I do.

And so when a man makes up his mind to come to Christ it is easy enough then, when you will

to do it. Oh, my friends, will to do it tonight. Let this be your last night of sin; let this be your last night in this dark world without God and without His Christ. Take the gift of God as you take other gifts, and tonight and tomorrow morning as you receive gifts and give them to others, rejoice that you have that gift, the only gift God has—the gift of His Son; a gift as free as the air; a gift that is an unspeakable gift. Let us bear in mind it was all He could do when He gave up Jesus Christ; He gave up the richest jewel Heaven had; He gave liberally all He had; and what an insult it is for you not to take God's gift; what an insult it is for you to spurn the gift of God. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Let us pray.

PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, we pray that these dear friends today may be wise; that they may take the gift of God, which is eternal life; that they may go down to their homes justified; that they may have these great enemies that stand in every man's path, overcome by the Man of Sorrows; that they may take Him that came into the world and gave His life for the world—that they may take Him to be their way, their truth, and their life; that they may this day and this hour believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Let Thy blessing, we pray Thee, rest upon the homes throughout this great city, and as the children shall gather on their festive occasion around the Christmas tree and in the family homes, may the blessing of God come upon them, and there be a great multitude in this city that shall receive this coming season God's Christmas gift.

And Thy name shall have the praise and the glory. Amen.

—THE END—

Not So Wise?

(Continued from page 3)

directed to it. It lies just south of Jerusalem, a journey of not more than a few hours."

"And Bethlehem is a royal city, and you found the king in one of its palaces?"

"No, Bethlehem is just a little place, just as the prophecy said—one of the thousands of Judah—and is no royal city, nor contains any palace. We found the king in a house."

"The king in a house! Who ever heard of anything so ridiculous!"

"We learned that he had been born in a stable some time before our arrival, because there was no place for his parents in the inns of the town. Later they moved to a little dwelling place near the gate of the town, and there is where we found the king."

"A stable? No room in the inn? Do those Jews have no respect for royalty?"

"The parents were not royalty. Oh, yes, they were of the family of King David, who reigned in Palestine a thousand years ago; but they were peasants from the village of Nazareth in Galilee."

"Peasants were the parents of a king you journeyed hundreds of miles to see?"

"Yes, Admatha, this is right. But we knew the babe in that humble home was the king we had come so far to find."

"The king was a baby born in a stable? Did everyone in Bethlehem know that he was a king?"

"No, nobody in the village seemed to know him or to pay any attention whatever to him. There were some shepherds who had told strange tales about being overwhelmed one night by the sudden arrival of an angel who had said he was bringing to them good tidings of great joy, which message was intended for everyone, saying to them that there had been born that same day in the city of David a Saviour, the Christ, or the Messiah."

"Shepherds who watch their flocks by night are given to all kinds of fanciful stories about ghosts, witches, and so forth, but this tale about angels is the tallest story they have concocted as yet. Shepherds, you know, are ignorant and superstitious people, and who would believe any story told by them?"

"Well, we believed their story because we were convinced of their complete candor, and also that their account coincided exactly with the prophecy in the Scriptures and with the presence of the star."

"On finding your so-called 'king' what did you all do?"

"We fell down and worshipped him, and presented to him the treasures we had brought from Persia—gold frankincense, and myrrh."

"You Wise Men gave such rare and costly gifts to some unknown Galilean peasant baby in a little rented house in Bethlehem?"

"Yes, we did."

"Balthasar, I thought I had heard every possible folly, but this is the greatest foolishness yet. And what did they do with your gifts?"

"We understand that a day or two later the family disappeared. Rumor has it that they went to Egypt."

"What a magnificent climax to this epic of imbecility—the pseudo-king disappears into the desert with your treasures. I have heard about rascals who robbed simpletons of their savings by pretending to have knowledge of some hidden treasure, but never before have I heard of Wise Men who gave gifts to Galilean peasants!"

"It may seem ludicrous and ridiculous to you, Admatha," stated Balthasar quietly and earnestly, "but we have seen the king. We know it was He."

"How did you know?"

"He was the answer to the star in the sky and the stir in our hearts!"

To their contemporaries the Wise Men must have seemed to be the most foolish of all the peoples of the East; but they were wiser than anyone thought.

Were they not wise to believe God's Word and to walk in its light, to believe that what He has said He will do?

Not wise to obey His Spirit with willingness to go in untrodden ways, like Abraham, "not knowing whither they went"?

Not wise to be adventuresome, to leave beaten paths and old ways, and to hitch their future to a star?

Not wise to see the King beyond the humble surroundings of that Bethlehem house?

Not wise to plan carefully their stewardship for the Saviour, and then to give it all to Him for whatever use He might have for it? Was it not God's gracious provision for Mary and Joseph to have their gift so as to be supported during their exile into Egypt? (And are we not wise to do as He bids us, to meet some need in His work which may be unknown to us at the moment?)

Not wise to leave it all with God—the fault-finding of well-meaning friends and the caustic comments of critics, the studied indifference of the cynical, and the hatred of a Herod?

The centuries have acclaimed their wisdom. He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour many not be considered to be wise, according to some of his companions; but eternity will acclaim his wisdom.

Not so wise? The Omniscent still causes "the foolish things of the world to confound the (worldly) wise," for "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Corinthians 1:27).

The Wise Men were wiser than others thought! And we, too, can be!

— THE END —

I've Really Stuck My Neck Out!

(Continued from page 4)

age required by the government.

Now we come to the very heart of the matter. As I say, I have really stuck my neck out! I believe I have done right. I prayed about it and took the matter up with my workers. With a great deal of enthusiasm and with some tears, they joined with me and said for me to go ahead. You would be surprised and pleased to see how these young people are adopting some of these young ministers. One young couple who both work for the Sword of the Lord adopted seventy ministerial students and are sending THE SWORD OF THE LORD to them for a year. Others are taking the same responsibility for groups of ministerial students in sending them THE SWORD OF THE LORD. And some of our 50 odd workers are giving very sacrificially to pay for these books. Now we believe God will put it in the hearts of many others to send their gifts, large and small.

Gifts specially designated for *Books for young ministers* will be used for this fund. Or if you wish, you may call it "Frog Literature Fund." Our other burdens go on. We must send the Gospel around the world. We must send THE SWORD OF THE LORD to ministers who need it. We deeply need a new building, which we cannot begin until more money is in hand. But there is a great immediate need for money to pay for these books sent to ministerial students. By the end of January we hope to have received and filled the requests. Will you help us?

It is a very simple plan upon which we have offered these books. First, we offer them only to ministerial students in actual training for the ministry. Second, we will give books to a student only once in a school year. Third, the request form has two lists. The student may order any or all of a limited number of books. We have a good supply of these on hand, and they are greatly needed. From a second list, the student is allowed to ask for not more than \$3 worth. And the student is to request only such books as he promises to read soon.

With these restrictions, I believe that the books will go where they are really needed, that there will

be little waste, and that God will bless the distribution.

Now we wait on you. And if you are going to help us, I beg you to do it as soon as possible.

Perhaps you should make a large gift to this *Books for young ministers Fund*, before January 1, so you can get deduction from taxable income, for your income tax for the year.

Remember, our confidence is in God. We are resting on His promises. He keeps His promises. Surely He has people who delight to help God keep His promises.

Please address your letter to the Sword of the Lord, 214 West Wesley, Wheaton, Illinois.

And God bless you richly. Don't forget that all the promises named above are good for you, too! As you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully. If you are a liberal soul, you will be made fat spiritually, and in prosperity. If you give, it shall be given to you. God loves the cheerful giver, He says, and God always keeps His promises and pay His debts. You may enter into the blessedness of these promises by trying them out today. Will you do it?

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